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EXPERIENTIAL **LEARNING** & **TEACHING** IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Volume 4.2 - Fall 2021

Special Issue - Exploring the Relationship between Experiential Learning and Social, Economic, Environmental, and Racial Justice

Experiential Learning & Teaching in Higher Education

Volume 4.2 - Fall 2021

Special Issue - Exploring the Relationship between Experiential Learning and
Social, Economic, Environmental, and Racial Justice

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Making Explicit Connections between Experiential Learning and Justice: New Approaches to Teaching and Learning through an Imagination for Justice

PATRICK M. GREEN

Loyola University Chicago

Beyond simply being a form of active learning, experiential learning, in its many iterations, has been promoted as a philosophy, a community development model, a theory, a professional skill training opportunity, a global education and civic development approach, and a pedagogical strategy that leads to deep, high impact learning. Indeed, experiential learning has become increasingly specialized in the last several decades with the evolution of numerous sub-fields, such as study abroad and global immersion programs, outdoor education programs, community-based learning (both domestic and global service-learning), internship and work-integrated learning, undergraduate research experiences, and a myriad of other high-impact learning programs. The field of experiential education is vast and deep due to this variety of sub-fields. Upon exploring experiential learning and teaching in the context of higher education, several common themes emerge, but one relatively underdeveloped theme has bubbled up to the surface repeatedly in the past two decades: the theme of justice.

Given events in the past year, from the struggles amid the global pandemic, to the resurgence of the racial injustice movement and politically divisive events challenging democracy, the urgent need for scholarly ideas around this theme of justice is ripe for dialogue. Although justice is often defined as right relationships in a pithy definition, drawing from the critical service-learning framework (Mitchell, 2008), justice is situated within the redistribution of power, developing authentic relationships, and fostering a social change orientation in order “to deconstruct systems of power so the need for service and the inequalities that create and sustain them are dismantled” (Mitchell, 2008, p. 50). In order to achieve a

more representative exploration of this theme of justice, the term in experiential learning has grown to include social, economic, racial, and environmental justice. The current context—mentioned above—demands that educators explicitly connect and explore justice within experiential learning and teaching. It is with this context in mind that this special issue of *Experiential Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* emerged, focusing on the theme of “Exploring the Relationship between Experiential Learning and Social, Economic, Racial, and Environmental Justice.”

Through an intentional, deliberative process with members of the National Society for Experiential Education’s (NSEE) Research and Scholarship Committee, this theme was strategically chosen to meet the committee’s goals and vision:

The NSEE Research and Scholarship Committee seeks to support, encourage, and create space for research and scholarship on experiential learning (EL) in pedagogy and practice with a particular focus on:

1. responding to the current context in order to innovate and lead for the future
2. emphasizing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion
3. amplifying the voices, knowledge, and experiences of communities and partners
4. promoting creative and innovative pedagogical, methodological, and/or epistemological approaches in EL
5. valuing practitioner-scholar approaches that connect practice and theory in EL
6. exploring spaces for scholarship that connect practice and theory in EL

in order to animate the NSEE mission and advance the field of experiential education. (NSEE Research and Scholarship Committee, 2021)

The goals of this committee not only expand the dialogue around experiential learning pedagogy and practice, but also build the field through research and scholarship. The emphasis on creative and innovative pedagogical and methodological approaches, along with explicit articulation of practitioner-scholar approaches connecting theory to practice, signal the creation of new pathways of exploration. Essentially, building upon the foundation of rich literature around experiential learning, the goals of this committee seek to advance the field by paving new pathways and exploring new pedagogies, new methodologies, and new epistemological approaches. This special issue, and the one forthcoming in spring 2022, seeks to accomplish this goal by offering new insights and strategies to apply a justice orientation to experiential education.

In the NSEE Research and Scholarship Committee, justice is clearly articulated and named as a priority emphasis of this exploration. With this emphasis in mind and, as this special issue was crafted, the call for proposals established multiple submission categories beyond traditional research and practice, including theory-building approaches, community-based research, cultural approaches, and public scholarship. This exploratory, scholarly approach to request proposals sought to deepen our understanding of the connection between the practice (experiential learning and teaching) and educational outcomes (social, economic, racial, and environmental justice) by creating space for practitioners, faculty, community partners, and practitioner-scholars to inquire within, reflect upon, and develop strategies for such pedagogy. An emphasis was placed on inquiry related to the relationship between experiential learning and justice, because “inquiry is not a separate, privileged discipline but is directly connected to our lives and the questions we bring to our lives.” (Reason, 1996, p. 16). This approach to inquiry requires us to “start from questions of experience, need, and practice as defined by the people with and for whom we are working. Human inquiry is thus essentially in-service” (Reason, 1996, p. 20). The focus of this issue, then, is on justice as it relates to our experiences with teaching and learning, both in content and delivery.

In the context of exploring the relationship between justice and experiential learning, Glennon (2004) writes that:

... in the case of teaching and learning about social justice, a praxis (action-reflection) model provides a more qualitative experience for learning about social justice than reading about social justice. ... Acting for justice deepens their learning by making ideas about justice

and injustice concrete, forcing students to reflect on the responses people and institutions have to their actions. Moreover, acting for justice now enhances their skills to act for justice in the future. (pp. 32–33)

In essence, this issue creates space for educators to explore justice and experiential learning by interrogating practices in teaching and learning, as well as facilitating inquiry into praxis and building theoretical approaches to practice. This scholarly approach to inquiry is rooted in the scholarship of teaching and learning (Huber & Hutchings, 2011), drawing from a practitioner-scholar inquiry framework (Ravitch, 2014; Green et al., 2020; Green et al., 2018), and anchored in community-engaged scholarship (Blanchard & Furco, 2021), acknowledging and prioritizing community voice, experience, and alternative epistemologies.

Moving toward an *Imagination for Justice* in our Teaching and Learning

Justice-related educational outcomes have long been related to service-learning and community-based learning (Butin, 2007), as well as other forms of experiential learning more broadly (Warren, 2019). The most common association of justice has been relegated to specific forms of experiential learning, such as study abroad programs/global engagement and service learning. For example, Butin (2007) advocated for the link between social justice education and service learning, noting barriers and offering a theoretical reframing around justice-learning. Mitchell (2008) introduced critical service-learning approaches promoting a social change orientation by developing authentic relationships in the community and fostering dialogue on power and privilege. Peterson (2015) furthermore connects study abroad programs with justice, stating that, “Students must be continually pushed to think of how their own lives relate to the conditions that they are studying. What does a commitment to justice and sustainability imply for their future roles as consumers, as citizens, as parents, as professionals?” (p. 202). Breunig (2019) discussed the need for experiential education to connect with social justice learning by increasing the social justice literacy of educators. For Breunig, the need to articulate connections to justice are both to support justice-related outcomes, as well as to not further barriers between justice and equity (e.g., color-blind approaches, white supremacy narratives, etc.). Warren (2019) reflects on how the experiential education field has long discussed social justice through diversity and equity, as well as through critical pedagogy. In this reflection, Warren explores the 2019 special issue of the *Journal of Experiential Education* (42.1)

focused on social justice as an imperative in experiential education, while also hearkening bell hooks' (1994) challenge for scholar-practitioners to teach to transgress so education is a practice of freedom.

Biren et al. (2003) explored experiential learning through the lens of multicultural education by connecting it to democracy and social justice. Their exploration into multicultural education, and its commonalities with critical pedagogy, led to the discovery of educating for democracy through justice:

While coming from different epistemological foundations, the focus of both multicultural education and critical pedagogy is to analyze social life through a lens of diversity and social justice and to prepare students to be transformative democratic agents. . . .

Educational efforts and programs grounded in these approaches recognize that the challenge in educating for democracy is more than instilling new knowledge. Education for democracy requires an ongoing process of 'changing the environmental, cognitive, and pedagogical contexts in which teaching and learning occur' (Gay, 1995, p. 160). Content and pedagogy may be sources of domination, but they can also be a basis for grappling with ethical responsibility, conducting critical analysis, and enacting the democratic ideals of equality, freedom, and justice (Greene, 1993; hooks, 1994; Nieto, 1995). (p. 167)

The study by Biren et al. (2003) indicated that reflection upon practice—which includes a critical consciousness essential for educating about democracy—also required active learning in the form of experiential learning. As such, the authors developed a theoretical model for engaged learning, which included content, active learning pedagogy, and engaged learning. Content was defined as “the emphasis of a structural analysis of oppression and inclusion of marginalized voices” (p. 169). Active learning pedagogy was situated within:

Freire's dialogic process—encouraging collective inquiry into social reality—corresponds to the reflective learning in Kolb's model and to the participatory learning that is emphasized in multicultural education. Active learning is seen to be critical. Education must encourage students to become active inquirers and transformers of the world around them. (p. 169)

The theoretical model commenced with engaged learning, in which:

The three streams also converge in expanding the boundaries of the learning environment from inside the classroom to include students' outside-the-classroom experiences. . . . Engaged learning, as we

define it in this model, is not simple engagement with classroom learning tasks. It is primarily students' out-of-class engagement with issues related to the course, reflecting on concepts after class, applying concepts to real-life situations, and talking with others outside of class. (p. 171)

Applying this theoretical model to their own class, Biren et al. conducted a study of their pedagogical practice and found that experiential learning contributed to the critical consciousness of students. In effect, their conclusions on active learning and engaged learning demonstrated that:

Both have the potential for generalizing the specific in-class learning to real-world situations and across different situations, and as in Freire's (1970) dialogic education process, for encouraging conscientization, that is, a structural understanding of social inequalities that helps people situate themselves in their own immediate social contexts. (p. 188)

The forms of experiential learning that include out-of-classroom experiences were significant in achieving the learning goals of educating about democracy through justice, especially through the lens of critical consciousness (Freire, 2000). The study by Biren et al. has stark implications for experiential teaching and learning, suggesting the potential for raising the critical consciousness of students and increasing awareness of structural injustice and social inequalities. The authors in this special issue explore this potential for critical consciousness with theory-building approaches and practice-based inquiry around the design of experiential learning and teaching.

Fenton and Gallant (2016) emphasize how some educators have connected experiential learning to justice, by highlighting how experiential learning may raise issues of oppression and issues surrounding unjust systems. The authors propose a model of integrated experiential education where the goal is to “[create] a more socially just society. Justice can begin to be negotiated through the student-instructor relationship and in authentic community work environments” (Fenton & Gallant, 2016, p. 10). Further identifying the shift of experiential learning focus from professionalism to social justice, the authors noted in their study the importance of the student-instructor relationship to create social change. Since several educators have emphasized the connection between various forms of experiential learning and justice education, it is time to be more explicit in our articulation of experiential learning and teaching approaches. Within this issue, a variety of educators articulate approaches to justice education through the lens of community-based

learning courses, internships, global education experiences, and other experiential learning opportunities. Building on the scholarship of teaching and learning framework, the authors emphasize not only experiential learning theory-building approaches but practice-based approaches encouraging educators to explore what is possible within justice education.

Drawing upon the work of Maxine Greene (1995), the educational philosopher focused on aesthetic education and social imagination, we look to imagination as a source for this connection and clear articulation to justice, since “the role of imagination is not to resolve, not to point the way, not to improve. It is to awaken, to disclose the ordinarily unseen, unheard, and unexpected” (p. 28). It is through this lens of imagination that innovative approaches to experiential learning and teaching may be obtained. Perhaps we need to apply an *imagination for justice* to our experiential learning and teaching so that, as Greene (1995) states, we move:

... toward an idea of imagination that brings an ethical concern to the fore, a concern that, again, has to do with the community that ought to be in the making and the values that give it color and significance. My attention turns back to the importance of wide-awakeness, of awareness of what it is to be in the world. (p. 35)

Greene (1995) advocated for education to be directly connected to justice, both in form and function. Her concept of pedagogy, which included lived experiences and active forms of learning, were inextricably linked to justice:

We should think of education as opening public spaces in which students, speaking in their own voices and acting on their own initiatives, can identify themselves and choose themselves in relation to such principles as freedom, equality, justice, and concern for others. We can hope to communicate that persons become more fully themselves and open to the world if they can be aware of themselves appearing before others, speaking in their own voices, and trying as they do so to bring into being a common world. (p. 68)

Such a vision for education requires us to employ an *imagination for justice* that addresses it in a multi-dimensional way; that is, through social, economic, racial, and environmental justice lenses that can be applied to our teaching and learning. The articles to follow, and the framework detailed in the ensuing section, offer strategies and tactics to *ELTHE*'s readership for how to employ an *imagination for justice* in our experiential learning and teaching.

Applying an Imagination for Justice: A Framework for a Justice Orientation in Experiential Learning and Teaching

Upon review of the article submissions, the experiential learning practice and theory-building approaches varied across institutional type, programmatic delivery, and experiential learning format. Yet, the common elements across article submissions, despite whether the submission was theory-building or practice-based, was to provide a framework around the application of justice to experiential learning and teaching. What key elements must emerge to construct such a framework? Lesham & Trafford historically define conceptual frameworks as a structure for organizing ideas and an iteration of a researcher's inquiry that may evolve as the inquiry evolves (2007). Punch (2000) further suggests that conceptual frameworks represent the conceptual status of the topics at hand and their relationship to each other.

Through a thematic analysis of scholarly approaches evident in this issue, a conceptual framework emerges that can inform a deeper connection between justice and an intentional design of experiential learning. Applying Greene's concept of imagination to the educational landscape further enriches the themes emerging from this issue, and substantively enriches the conceptual framework. The framework (see Figure 1) offers an approach that applies an imagination for justice from the perspectives of pedagogy, practice, program, purpose, and policy. When these aspects of experiential teaching and learning are in relationship with each other, often overlapping and interconnected as in Figure 1, such a justice-orientation deepens for student learning through experience.

This framework serves as a guide for planning to incorporate justice education into experiential learning and teaching by recognizing the dimensions related to content, delivery, structure, and format. Operating from the lenses of the scholarship of teaching and learning (Huber & Hutchings, 2011) and engaged scholarship (Blanchard & Furco, 2021), a rich description of the framework follows. A cogent description of each aspect of the framework is offered below, accompanied by examples from my own experience as a scholar-administrator and practitioner-scholar (Janke, 2019; Ravitch, 2014). Finally, each example discussed references articles in this issue that explicate innovative strategies and approaches and enliven the proposed framework (e.g., for an Imagination for Justice in experiential learning and teaching).

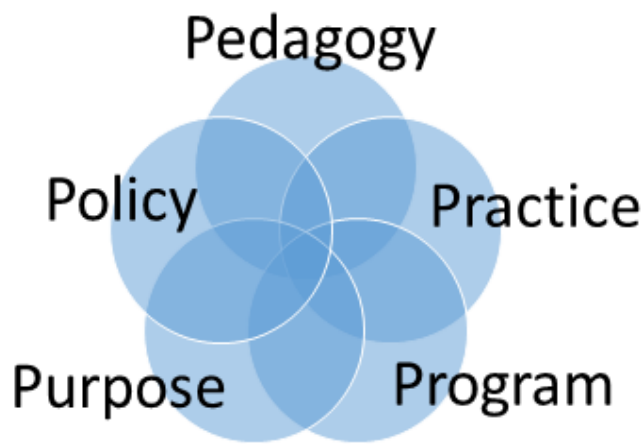


Figure 1. *A Framework for an Imagination for Justice in Experiential Learning and Teaching*

Pedagogy. Beyond course design and engaging activities that support justice, the teaching and learning strategies employed offer another opportunity to incorporate justice in experiential education. Drawing from my experience as an educator of experiential learning at Loyola University Chicago, I have co-taught community-based learning courses with a community partner as the co-educator and in the community (on-site of a non-profit organization). This innovative course design allows the knowledge, skills, and experiences of community partners to be centered and anchored in the classroom, as well as situating the learning in and with the community. From universal design methods to employing anti-racist practices in each program or course, the pedagogical techniques utilized may engage the community of learners differently, while building the class as a community of scholars.

In this issue, Haarman addresses this concept of the class as a community and reframes it through a theory-building article on civic education in “Democratic Community as a Public of Others: Combating Failed Citizenship in Refugees.” Heinrich et al. offer a justice-oriented pedagogical framework in “Reimagining Scripts for Human and Environmental Justice in Experiential Learning.” Emmerling et al. offer a pedagogical reflection tool and explore the transformation of service-learning pedagogy to foster critical consciousness in “Designing Service-Learning to Enhance Social Justice Commitments: A Critical Reflection Tool.” Rasmussen explores the pedagogical approaches that align course learning outcomes with justice outcomes in a service-learning course in “Developing Community Partnerships to Promote Social Justice-Related Learning Outcomes.” These articles also inform and overlap with the topic of practices in experiential learning and teaching.

Practice. The implementation of the experiential learning program, including the in-class and out-of-class activities, experiences, and reflection opportunities, may have a justice-orientation in practice. For example, offering multi-modal reflection assignments (written, oral, and creative) to capture various learning preferences as well as offering multiple experiences at various times are examples of providing equity across experiences. In addition, employing content related to justice is essential, as students raise their consciousness, become aware of complex systemic injustice issues, and explore the world around them through experience. As a faculty member, utilizing community-based learning in both graduate and undergraduate courses, I have implemented written, oral, and creative reflection activities to address learning pathways for all students. I have also engaged community partners to develop both content for class by co-instructing courses, facilitating project-based learning, and leading reflection opportunities within the classroom and on-site in the community. Such practices break down the four walls of the classroom and connect students directly within the community.

In other forms of experiential learning, such as academic internship courses, building multiple feedback loops allowing students to acquire a growth mindset and acknowledging the experience and knowledge of site supervisors may serve as another example. In the context of this issue, Odio addresses issues of social and economic justice, presenting a theoretical framework of liminality and interrogating educational internship practices in “Using Liminality to Understand How Identity and Temporary Status Influence Interns’ Vulnerability.” Raphael’s article “Moving from Dialogue to Deliberation about Campus Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” applies Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle to intergroup dialogue about DEI issues on campus in order to engage students in DEI learning. DeMartini details a rich portrait of discipline-specific service-learning course aiming to increase student awareness of the historical racial disparities and treatments in US national parks and recreation offerings in “Social Justice through Service-Learning in Parks & Recreation Management Education.” Abbas provides a discipline-specific approach through an introductory anthropology course that lays the foundations for social advocacy and justice work in “Fundamentals of Anthropology as Effective Experiential Learning Strategy to Promote Social Justice.” Such practices inform program development as well.

Program. Designing experiential learning programs or courses dedicated to justice as both substantive

content and as the core outcome is yet another demonstration of applying an imagination for justice. Drawing from my own experience as a practitioner-scholar at Loyola University Chicago, I developed a year-long social justice academic internship program, as well as a community-based research course (EXPL 291: Seminar in Community-based Research), which focused on social analysis and exploring conceptions of justice around issues such as refugee/immigrant rights or diversity, equity, and inclusion in educational settings. Both are explicit examples of such programs designed around justice, in which the content involved interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and multi-disciplinary approaches to the themes of the course.

In this special issue, Savoca demonstrates how to employ diversity, equity, and inclusion programs in a complex institution in “Building an Ecosystem of Diversity Talent Development through Experiential Learning.” Bowen and Berrien characterize the Barry Service Corps Fellows Program, a co-curricular program including advocacy, public action, and issue-based projects, in “Implementing an Experiential Learning Program Focused on Civic Leadership to Produce Social Justice Outcomes.” Rogers and Orange detail a civic education program in “Agents of Change: Lessons Learned from the Nation’s First Undergraduate Civil Rights Advocacy Clinic.” Gokcora and Oenbring describe how a collaborative, cross-cultural program helps students connect to justice outcomes in “Experiential Learning across Borders: Virtual Exchange and Global Social Justice.” As each of these articles describe experiential learning programs, they also identify a clear purpose in learning related to justice outcomes

Purpose. Unapologetically articulating justice learning goals and outcomes in experiential learning programs or courses is yet another opportunity to apply an imagination for justice. Explicating the justice learning goals is a crucial step toward communicating the vision, goals, and intention of a course or program. In each of my courses, at least one learning outcome articulates exploring frameworks of justice as a significant aspect of the course. In addition, all experiential learning programs in Loyola’s Center for Engaged Learning, Teaching, and Scholarship (CELTS) detail program learning outcomes and a conceptual framework with justice as a foundational pillar.

The practice-based and theory-building articles in this issue examine opportunities to articulate such outcomes through a variety of frameworks. Li-Grining et al. propose transformative social and

emotional learning competencies as a conceptual framework to engage marginalized students and approach experiential learning with intentionality in their theory-building article, “Promoting Educational Equity: Embedding Transformative Social and Emotional Learning in Experiential Learning.” Sokol et al. apply an eco-justice framework with students working in the Campus Kitchen program to explore more equitable ways of relating to food and community in “Enriching the Vision of Campus Kitchen: A Recipe for Justice.” These articles not only offer a framework to articulate justice-related outcomes, but also inform the development of policies and structures of experiential learning programs.

Policy. Whether focused on the infrastructure, program structure, or student-instructor-community partner relationship triad, an experiential learning program’s criteria, policies, and organization may include a justice-orientation. From program design that creates access and equity for all groups, especially recognizing and prioritizing underserved student populations, to policies that are inclusive of all learners, the design and structure of program or course may exhibit the justice-orientation. For example, in CELTS at Loyola University Chicago, we recently obtained funding for students with financial need who are in unpaid internships. In addition, we collaborated with the Student Government and our Office of Financial Aid to obtain funding each semester for all students who express financial need are engaged in a form of experiential learning that is unpaid (e.g., research, fieldwork, internship). Such policies and funding opportunities address some barriers and open up new pathways for students.

The framing language, course design, and theoretical foundations that we utilize in our experiential learning programs may be another gateway toward opening an imagination for justice. Course design and theoretical foundations may frame experiential learning course and program structures with a justice orientation. Wessels et al. explore student relationships and course design in the context of a collaboration between a practicum-based course and a social enterprise, in which students examine complex social justice concepts, in “Fostering Self-Authorship and Changemaking: Insights from a Social Entrepreneurship Practicum.” Lauder and Berkey share the SAIL framework and interrogate how a variety of justice theories informs the structure of the experiential learning course in “Justice Isn’t One-Size-Fits-All: Working toward Justice in Service-Learning Courses.”

Conclusion

To create space for practitioner-scholars to examine and explore the connections between justice and experiential learning, the educators published in this volume interrogate programs and their practices in experiential teaching and learning, as well as facilitate inquiry into practice, building theoretical approaches and exploring praxis as a pathway to justice education. The resulting scholarly articles published in this special issue of *Experiential Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* (fall 2021) offer new perspectives into practice and theoretical approaches to expand our justice-orientation in experiential learning and teaching.

The time is ripe to acknowledge how important democracy education and justice learning (Butin, 2007) are in higher education. The recent call for democracy education as an imperative in higher education is noted in the shared commitment pledge for “equitable participation” in “high-quality civic learning” by the Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement (CLDE) coalition (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2021, para. 2). The CLDE is comprised of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO), Complete College America (CCA), College Promise, and, most recently, the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU). This coalition of hundreds of institutions has identified four goals: quality and equity; democracy and engagement; collaborative problem-solving; and policy commitment. The emphasis on justice-oriented education is clearly articulated in the description of the collaborative problem-solving goal:

Prepare each postsecondary student, through creative combinations of general education, arts and sciences studies, and career-related studies, to work directly on selected public problems that society needs to solve—e.g., problems in racial healing, health, education, housing, climate, digital access, human rights, justice systems, and interfaith cooperation. (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2021, para. 10)

The explicit lens of social, economic, racial and environmental justice is communicated through references to justice systems as well as references to racial healing, housing, climate and human rights. Multiple professional organizations are advocating for justice to be a central focus in education.

The proposed *Imagination for Justice* framework encourages us to apply a justice-orientation to our teaching and learning through our policies, practices, pedagogy, programs, and purpose. This framework

represents a call to action for experiential learning educators to work toward an imagination for justice that more explicitly connects and articulates justice learning (Butin, 2007) and outcomes in our curricular and co-curricular experiential learning programs. Through this framework, there is powerful potential for deep learning, community building, inclusivity, space creation, and innovative education. As the scholars in this volume indicate, we first need to alter our pedagogical strategies, practices, programs, and policies and prioritize justice as a significant purpose of learning and teaching. ■

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Designing Service-Learning to Enhance Social Justice Commitments: A Critical Reflection Tool

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The interlocking crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing state violence—both of which disproportionately affect Black Americans and people of color—have intensified questioning of how higher education can contribute to dismantling systemic injustices. Practitioner-scholars continue to assert that commitments to democratic citizenship and social justice should more deeply inform higher education (e.g., Delbanco, 2012; Harkavy, 2006; Thompson, 2014) and experiential education (e.g., Warren, 2019). For the purpose of this article, we define social justice as the equitable distribution of economic, political, and social rights, opportunities, and power. To support practitioner-scholars who seek to promote social justice, we introduce an action-oriented critical reflection design tool; while this tool was developed for service-learning in particular, we believe it is relevant to other forms of experiential education as well.

Although specific definitions vary, there is broad consensus that service-learning engages students, community members, staff, and instructors in co-creating strategies that integrate academic material, community-engaged activities, and critical reflection to advance both learning and social change (Bringle & Clayton, 2021; Furco & Norvell, 2019; Jacoby, 2015). Service-learning is one experiential pedagogy among many—including internships, field research, clinical placements, and practice teaching—that integrate

“Enactment of social justice within service-learning is complicated because it has not been a universal aspiration or intended outcome among practitioner-scholars.”

active reflection on lived experience to facilitate knowledge construction and skill development. Although more explicitly framed in terms of education for democracy than for social justice per se, Dewey’s (1937, 2010) critique of didactic teaching called educators to engage students as actors, not audience, in their education. Dewey emphasized that students need not only to participate in but also to exercise power in teaching and learning, and his analysis gave rise to a suite of experiential education pedagogies. This early framing of experiential education—grounded in and committed to shared power—supports the current movement to deepen service-learning’s enactment of social justice.

Like in experiential learning, contemporary calls for an explicit social justice focus within service-learning (e.g., Augustine et al., 2017) build on a long, albeit inconsistent, presence of such commitments among practitioner-scholars. According to some of the pioneers of service-learning, social justice was one of the pedagogy’s intended outcomes since its founding (Shumer, 2017; Stanton et al., 1999). In the decades prior to the establishment of service-learning as a pedagogy within higher education, African American women and educators actualized community service agendas to influence social change and provided philosophical precursors for the pedagogy (Stevens, 2003). The growth of service-learning also builds on historic interest among

college students in social movements and civic action, with their promise of equitable engagement, intentional examination of power, and reciprocal impact (Kendall & Associates, 1990). Service-learning's early connections to servant leadership emphasized mutual growth through transformational relationships (Greenleaf, 1970; Sigmon, 1979). Freirean thought and other forms of reflexive and dialectic theory brought to the pedagogy the understanding that to surmount oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes (Deans, 1999; Freire, 1990).

It has been suggested, however, that in service-learning's founding texts, "people of color enter the historical narrative as either largely absent (if the focus is on scholars, practitioners, and students) or as the recipients of service" (Bocci, 2015, p. 10). According to Kowal (2020), despite naming a commitment to social justice, the pioneers of service-learning "fail to associate the challenges that racial division, political unrest, and systemic poverty played in the formation of the field" (p. 164). Enactment of social justice within service-learning is complicated because it has not been a universal aspiration or intended outcome among practitioner-scholars. Morton (1995) established that working toward systems change was only one of three primary paradigms of service-learning (the others being acts of charity and collaborative service projects). Whether due to conflicting ideological underpinnings or inadequate implementation in practice, service-learning has long been criticized for perpetuating inequitable social hierarchies, teaching simplistic understandings of solutions to social problems, and failing to equip students with the social change skills they need to advance social justice (Eby, 1998; Mitchell & Latta, 2020; Stewart & Webster, 2010). Many of these critiques of service-learning are echoed by scholars about other forms of experiential education as a privileged set of pedagogies that maintain the status quo and reproduce dominant power relations (Browne et al., 2019; Rose & Paisley, 2012).

In response to these critiques, "critical service-learning" orients service-learning toward developing critical consciousness and dismantling structures of inequality. Through analysis, dialogue, and discussion, participants in well-designed critical service-learning experiences "question and problematize the status quo" and collaborate to "bring society closer to justice" (Mitchell, 2008, p. 56, 62). Mitchell's critical service-learning framework specifically calls for redistributing power among students, instructors, and community members; nurturing authentic relationships; and incorporating a deliberate orientation toward social change with the goal "to deconstruct systems

of power so the need for service and the inequalities that create and sustain them are dismantled" (p. 50).

Given these purposes, designing educational experiences that speak to historic and contemporary social justice issues can be a significant challenge. To aid in the design process, our team created a reflection-based tool on aligning service-learning and experiential education practices with social justice. In the next section, *Line of Inquiry*, we articulate and briefly explore the key underlying question: "What actionable steps can service-learning practitioners take to more effectively orient service-learning toward social justice?" In *Description of the Practice*, we introduce readers to the reflection tool by summarizing and illustrating how it employs action-oriented statements to help align design of service-learning with social justice and critical service-learning principles. The *Productive Tensions* section that follows examines tensions that arose within our working group as we co-developed the tool and co-authored this article—illuminating some of the challenges associated with walking the talk of enacting shared commitments to justice. The tensions we experienced offer a microcosm that reflects the ongoing evolution of service-learning, of experiential education, and of work to advance social justice more broadly. Therefore, we frame them as questions for reflection and future inquiry. The purpose of this article and of the reflection tool itself is to contribute to the ongoing development of service-learning and experiential education principles and practices in ways that explicitly encourage critical consciousness and the redistribution of power towards more life-giving and liberatory futures.

Line of Inquiry

Conscious planning and effort are required to align service-learning with social justice and lead students—indeed, all collaborators in the process—to examine their political agency and social justice commitments (Clifford, 2017). In our work with service-learning faculty and staff at several institutions, instructors have reported that despite their interest in critical service-learning, they struggle with the choices and trade-offs in designing their courses accordingly. Our reflection tool aims to provide some element of guidance and accountability as collaborators—the term we use in the tool to encompass all participants and to position them as full partners—recalibrate relationships and shift practices.

To become critical service-learning practitioners, collaborators must build structural competency to both understand and intervene in the systems that

shape individual action and opportunities. Coined in the clinical setting, the term “structural competency” refers to understanding “how culture and structure are mutually co-implicated in producing stigma and inequality” (Metzl & Hansen, 2014, p. 6). For example, collaborators must operate with an awareness that “the mere option of being able to take part in service-learning in a university context already creates a hierarchical relationship” (Santiago-Ortiz, 2019, p. 45). Without critical investigation into the ways higher education structures and systems shape the pedagogy (e.g., Fine, 2016), service-learning can reinforce neoliberal values of “personal over collective agency” and can treat “public life and democracy as extensions of the marketplace” (Morton & Bergbauer, 2015, p. 19; Stewart & Webster, 2010). Dedicating effort to build authentic relationships between service-learning collaborators can limit the artificial homogenization of participants and their various communities, yet the cultivation of such relationships can be challenging within the structural and cultural norms and constraints of the academy. Collaborators in service-learning can problematize and push back on such norms and constraints through, for example, adopting asset-based approaches to engagement (da Cruz, 2017). An asset-based approach shifts blame for social problems away from individuals—locating causes of injustice within structures and enshrined systems of power and reducing barriers for students whose identities may be connected to communities otherwise framed as “those served” (Hickmon, 2015; Mitchell et al., 2012). Such a critical orientation to the processes, relationships, assumptions, and intended outcomes of service-learning, however, is often counter-normative. Given the student development mission of higher education, service-learning programs and research have focused “more attention on the learning and development of students than on development and change in communities” (Mitchell, 2007, p. 103). Moreover, some faculty worry that critical interventions can disrupt more “relevant” content learning and can, in turn, have negative effects on tenure or promotion (Cooper, 2014).

Consequently, the critical service-learning literature calls for instructors to reflect on their own positionality and partnerships through a critical self-assessment lens (Butin, 2015; Latta et al., 2018). Such reflection is necessary because pre-existing biases and stereotypes may limit the ability of service-learning collaborators to dismantle discrimination in and outside the classroom, especially when pursuing social justice in communities that are primarily low-income, Black, Indigenous, or people of color (Mitchell, 2007;

Pratt et al., 2017). Given these needs and challenges and with intentional focus on critical reflection as well as grounding in service-learning, social justice, and community-organizing literature, our reflection tool responds to the question: What actionable steps can service-learning practitioners take to orient service-learning more effectively toward social justice?

Description of the Practice

In 2016, students, staff, and faculty associated with Duke Service-Learning created a “Critical Service-Learning Conversations Tool” to support the implementation of critical pedagogy and advance social justice in service-learning courses (Stith et al., 2018). During the 2020-2021 academic year, an expanded working group revised that original version of the tool to include emergent thinking in the field as well as feedback from multiple conference sessions during which we shared our work. Developed for experiential education and service-learning practitioners with any level of familiarity with critical theory, Duke’s Critical Service-Learning Reflection Tool is a reflection and planning instrument. The tool is intended to support all collaborators (i.e., instructors, students, staff, community members) in reflecting critically on their service-learning design and implementation and setting actionable goals that move their practices beyond performative, discursive, or tokenistic commitments to social justice.

The tool includes statements grouped into five themes: *Reckoning with Systems*, *Authentic Relationships*, *Redistribution of Power*, *Equitable Classrooms & Cognitive Justice*, and *Social Change Skills*. We developed the five themes from reading the critical service-learning literature and from our own experiences with community-engaged pedagogies. Three themes are based on the framework for critical service-learning established by Mitchell (2008): *Authentic Relationships*, *Redistribution of Power*, and *Social Change Skills* (originally, “Social Change Orientation”). The theme *Equitable Classrooms & Cognitive Justice* originated from our engagement with critiques of service-learning as a pedagogy of whiteness (e.g., Mitchell, 2012), and the theme *Reckoning with Systems* emerged from our engagement with the concept of structural competency (e.g., Metzl, 2014).

In developing and refining the Critical Service-Learning Conversations Tool, we aimed to be intentional in our use of language. For example, throughout the statements, instructors, community partners, students, and other stakeholders are referred to as “collaborators” to emphasize that all participants are to be positioned as co-educators, co-learners,

and co-generators of knowledge and practice in service-learning that enacts commitments to democratic engagement and social justice. We tried to minimize potential challenges associated with the use of jargon—for example, limitations on accessibility for all users—without diluting the intentions of critical concepts and without losing the critical social justice edge (see more below on the tensions associated with this).

In the following sub-sections, we review each of the tool's five themes and provide a selection of the literature that inspired the statements within that theme. We encourage readers to use the [Critical Service-Learning Reflection Tool](#) to reflect on their own service-learning and experiential education designs with the goals of determining degree of alignment with social justice principles and practices and taking subsequent action to improve their pedagogies. We suggest that collaborators focus attention on as many statements as they deem reasonable and return to the tool over time to review their progress and deepen their practice. We offer the set of statements not as exhaustive but rather as a generative starting place for collaborators in experiential education to consider and undertake concrete steps toward deepening commitments to social justice.

Reckoning with Systems

Calderón (2014) critiques service-learning's lack of focus on the systems that surround and create social problems by stating: "Without an education that looks at the systemic and structural foundations of social problems, students will be taught the symptoms of the problems instead of understanding the character of the structure that is placing individuals in those conditions" (p. 92). By reckoning with systems, collaborators in service-learning build understanding of, for example, how the "contours of racial inequality today flow directly from the racial and spatial heritage bequeathed to us from the past" (Lipsitz, 2007, p. 17). Sample statements from this theme in the tool include:

- Collaborators examine how societal narratives and norms, institutional structures, policies, and routine practices systematically perpetuate injustice—rather than reducing injustice to the acts of individuals.
- Collaborators examine their personal stakes in dismantling unjust systems and how they and the institutions they participate in sustain inequities within systems.

The items that comprise this theme encourage collaborators to "combine action and reflection in class-

room and community to examine both the historical precedents of the social problems addressed in their service placements and the impact of their personal action/inaction in maintaining and transforming those problems" (Mitchell, 2008, p. 54).

Authentic Relationships

When building authentic relationships, collaborators aim neither to ignore the realities of social inequality nor to artificially homogenize people based on their positionality and identity factors. To clarify, there is nuance in forming authentic relationships; the experiences and insights shared by individual collaborators do not monolithically represent entire communities. To better understand and intervene on systems, it is prudent to get to know individuals organically. The statements in this theme center on building relationships that "analyze power, build coalitions, and develop empathy" (Mitchell, 2008, p. 58). Sample statements from this section include:

- Collaborators develop a shared understanding of the assets and history of the places and people where community engagement takes place, including the relationship between community and campus.
- Collaborators create supports for authentic relationships such as written understanding of expectations, responsibilities, and goals for working together (e.g., memorandum of understanding, regular/scheduled check-ins, meetings both on campus and in the community, ongoing feedback and planning sessions, and engaging beyond the service-learning experience).

Items in this theme acknowledge that service-learning takes place within an existing history of community-campus relationships, that accountability and transparency can be built into relationships, and that engagement beyond the limits of the service-learning projects can help deepen authentic relationships.

Redistribution of Power

This theme "names the differential access to power experienced by students, faculty, and community members, and encourages analysis, dialogue, and discussion of those power dynamics" (Mitchell, 2008, p. 56). Sample statements from this section of the tool include:

- All collaborators have the opportunity to influence course content, syllabi, activities, roles and responsibilities, schedules, and indicators of success.

- Collaborators respect community assets and existing personal and social capital as resources central to the partnership.
- Collaborators seek to balance the interests and roles of all stakeholders, with social change as the primary focus of the partnership.

Overall, statements that comprise this theme focus on co-creating the design and content of the collaboration; using the power of narrative to challenge dominant framings; and taking concrete actions to share, shift, and redistribute power and resources.

Equitable Classrooms & Cognitive Justice

Students and other participants in service-learning experiences are more diverse than ever; however, university faculty continue to be overwhelmingly white (Davis & Fry, 2019). Numerous scholars have indicated that service-learning as most often theorized and implemented remains a pedagogy of whiteness (e.g., Bocci, 2015; Mitchell et al., 2012). Therefore, the statements within this theme anchor service-learning in cognitive and epistemic justice: the recognition and active inclusion of numerous co-existing knowledge sources and systems. Sample statements from this section of the tool include:

- Instructors and facilitators ensure that sources from diverse identities and perspectives are represented in the educational and service experiences, and make clear that no one person represents the thoughts and experiences of an entire group of people.
- Collaborators make deliberate choices about how learning environments reflect power differentials and choose more participatory and egalitarian approaches (e.g., meeting circles, collaborative inquiry, shared leadership models).
- Conversations and reflections about race, class, and privilege are sustained throughout the educational experiences and collaboration.

The statements within this theme situate decisions about readings, resources, and knowledge production as political acts and focus on practices that allow collaborators to partner, learn, and act together in ways that are equitable, inclusive, and just.

Social Change Skills

With attention to various models of social change

that actively push against the status quo, the statements within this theme encourage collaborators to develop critical “orientations” (Mitchell, 2008) and to utilize skills that address barriers to social, economic, and racial justice. Sample statements from this section of the tool include:

- Collaborators look beyond the usual non-profits, schools, and government agencies for partnerships with groups actively working to change systems and policies.
- Collaborators examine various approaches to social change (e.g., community-engaged learning and research, community organizing, activism, direct service, philanthropy, policy and governance, social entrepreneurship, and corporate social responsibility) in terms of their potential benefits and potential to perpetuate systems of inequality.

We highlight social change “skills” because of our sense that collaborators desire social justice but may lack the concrete tools and strategies they need to implement change. The tool suggests that all collaborators actively participate in all aspects of service-learning, including program implementation and delivery, root-cause analysis, coalition building, and social change strategy mapping. This collaborative approach to design and implementation encourages reciprocity within service-learning and experiential education.

Productive Tensions

We recognize that our process of revising the Critical Service-Learning Reflection Tool and writing this article was “an exploration of what inquiry and practice might look like when practitioner-scholars acknowledge that the process is always inherently enacting values and when . . . [we] define and undertake it in ways that explicitly walk the talk of [our] values” (Kniffin et al., 2020, p. 20). In this section, therefore, we reflect on tensions that arose in our working group as we refined the tool and wrote this article together. These tensions were an important part of our own experiential education as a working group of multiracial, multigenerational practitioner-scholars who, while committed to exploring service-learning as a potential tool for social justice outcomes, have varying depths of knowledge in critical theory and service-learning literatures as well as different lived experiences of both systems of oppression and work towards social justice. Conflict, miscommunication, and tension were part of our writing process as we struggled to honor each member’s contributions

while also holding different perspectives on both the field and ways forward. We believe our experience will be relevant to users of our reflection tool, as tension points are bound to emerge in any efforts to integrate an explicit social justice orientation in service-learning and other forms of experiential education. It is our conviction that acknowledging tension and holding it generatively can transform the practice of and inquiry into service-learning and other forms of experiential education in ways that deepen our individual and collective orientations toward social justice. Below, we frame the tensions that became visible in our working group process as five questions—questions practitioner-scholars must grapple with to advance critical service-learning practice and inquiry.

How Can We Support Generative Conflict?

After an academic year of remote work together, tension and conflict nearly dissolved our working group. For some group members, these difficulties echoed critiques of service-learning as a pedagogy of whiteness (Mitchell, 2012). Different perspectives about when racism should be named distinct from other forms of injustice created tensions. We also struggled with the appropriate mix of authors to cite and highlight from the multiple bodies of work related to experiential education, service-learning, and critical service-learning.

Sitting with these tensions and making them visible to each other allowed this project to move forward, but this process was frequently taxing for the authors. Drawing upon the *Authentic Relationships* section of our reflection tool, we could have better managed tensions by establishing “how critical feedback and conflict will be handled, used to make collective decisions, and grow authentic relationships.” We did eventually learn to “name [our] shared experiences, the things [we] don’t know about [our] partners’ experiences, and the way systems of power impact [our] relationships and interactions,” as the tool enjoins. Our collaboration confirmed for us the importance of finding ways to promote healing throughout processes that contain conflict. To make discussions related to race and racism more productive, we could also intentionally implement the item: “Examine how intersectional identities shape and constrain authentic relationships.” With these considerations and direction from our reflection tool, we believe holding space for productive tensions and conflict in implementing and inquiring into experiential education can be generative—perhaps even transformative.

Who Defines Social Justice?

Critical service-learning continues to be refined and

critiqued through both decolonial and post-critical lenses that decenter the western canon and hegemonic ways of knowing (Bruce, 2018; Santiago-Ortiz, 2019). Our collaboration has often mirrored the contentious divisions that continue to emerge in the field of service-learning. Members of the working group with different understandings of and experiences with “democratic,” “critical,” and “transformative learning” strands of literature each provided different, and, at times, conflicting perspectives on how social justice might be understood and enacted. For example, one tension our working group experienced centered on how we should frame the origins of service-learning. We struggled to decide whether to highlight the intentions of the field’s founders or to focus on the problematic nature and impact of the assumptions, relationships, and systems “traditional” service-learning so often reproduces. The conflation and flattening of democratic, critical, and transformative approaches under the heading of social justice—which we both experience ourselves and observe in the field at large—represents an opportunity for service-learning and experiential educators to delineate and discuss the commonalities, distinctions, and metrics through which each of these frameworks is implemented and evaluated.

Can (or Should) Service-Learning Be Reformed?

Another recurring tension while refining the tool and writing this article involved our team’s various understandings about service-learning’s potential to achieve equitable distributions of economic, political, and social rights, opportunities, and power. For some of us, the context of systemic and institutional inequity, racial capitalism, and settler-colonialism severely limit progress toward such ends. In this light, service-learning can teach:

... the racializing codes for vulnerable or exploited groups through so-called leadership training and discourses of service, mission, benevolence, and reform. As students learn to do good, to feed the poor, to uplift women, and to presume responsibility for near and distant others, they learn to play their parts in the civilizing/disqualifying regimes that target populations disconnected from circuits of neoliberal wealth and value. (Melamed, 2011, p. 45)

For other members of our group, the field of service-learning, like an asymptote, is continually approaching a social justice orientation such that practitioners become more equipped to enact social justice commitments the more they critically reflect and learn. To make this latter perspective a reality, we can accept existing critiques of service-learning, take

up a lens of futurity, and consider how service-learning practice that is increasingly oriented toward social justice would look (e.g., Latta & Mitchell, 2020). One assumption our working group agreed upon is that such action to advance a social justice orientation in experiential education is preferable to no action at all.

How Might Service-learning Practitioners Be Prepared to Implement Critical Service-Learning?

A core tension we experienced both in refining the tool and writing this article centered on who the imagined users and readers would be. One of the most common areas of improvement raised by participants in a conference workshop focused on critiquing an earlier draft of the tool was enhancing accessibility through limiting jargon. In particular, workshop participants mentioned their unfamiliarity with terms like “abolition” and “decolonizing” within service-learning. Our working group differed on whether to prioritize accessibility of language for service-learning practitioners or to continue to use the language of social justice and critical theory so as to connect users of the tool with deep traditions of critical thought.

These tensions prompted us to reflect on a statement in the *Equitable Classrooms & Cognitive Justice* theme of our tool: “Collaborators confront how knowledge creation is a political project in terms of what questions are valued, what truths are legitimized, who and what sources are considered experts, and what values are endorsed (e.g., objectivity, scientific positivism).” Focusing on the complexities of systemic injustice while balancing access and amenability for a broad range of users and readers is a challenge. As the field increasingly works to deepen the orientation of service-learning and experiential education more broadly toward social justice, collaborators must consider their motives, worldviews, and language choices and build their capacity to institute both incremental and substantive change on campuses and in communities.

What Does the Urgency of this Moment Call for in Terms of Movement Toward Social Justice-Oriented Service-Learning?

As institutions of higher education increasingly adopt the language of social justice and antiracism (in their mission statements, curricula, and marketing), whether these rhetorical shifts will also be accompanied by substantial and material changes has yet to be seen (e.g., Reneau & Villarreal, 2021). Ahmed (2004) suggested that institutional speech-acts may serve as a replacement for more tangible changes. Therefore, we aim to support service-learning collab-

orators in making changes that result in more than shifting language. One statement in the tool read, “Collaborators examine the complexities and risks of social movement building (e.g. [performance activism](#), [non-performativity](#), [burnout](#), and [movement capture](#)).” We included this statement precisely because the tool should provide support in shifting systems and outcomes towards greater justice and liberation.

However, members of our working group differed on the extent to which we patiently work within systems of higher education or actively disrupt them. We struggled with the following questions: How much and what types of change is needed within service-learning to create liberatory shifts? Additionally, how do we best undertake change processes at the departmental-, campus-, and community-level to support implementation of social justice aligned pedagogies?

Conclusion

As Kniffin et al. (2020) observed of inquiry in service-learning: “The tools used to deepen understanding and practice can, have, and need to expand to reflect both the changing contexts within which [. . .] work is undertaken and the ever-growing set of relevant conceptual and theoretical frameworks available” (p. 3). The overall purpose of our team’s work together is to guide the ongoing development of service-learning and experiential education principles and practices in ways that explicitly encourage transformations in critical consciousness and the redistribution of power.

In this article, we provided an overview of a tool designed to incorporate and advance social justice in higher education and shared our understanding of how service-learning and other forms of experiential education might best operationalize and push ever-advancing leading edges. We documented some of the central tensions service-learning practitioner-scholars may experience as they try to deepen the processes and products of their work in ways that are counter-normative to dominant methods of teaching, learning, and inquiry—indeed, in ways that walk the talk of our commitments to social justice. As with all efforts to advance social justice and democracy, deepening critical orientations to service-learning and experiential education requires that we generatively and co-creatively hold tension between the world we encounter and the world to which we aspire. Our hope is that our analysis of the ongoing development of the Critical Service-Learning Reflection Tool may provide readers with inspiration, encouragement, guidance, and proposed lines of inquiry to advance this important and timely work. Please find the

current reflection tool here: <https://servicelearning.duke.edu/duke-service-learning-critical-conversations-tool>. ■

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Enriching the Vision of Campus Kitchen: A Recipe for Justice

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"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

– Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," 1963

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s iconic claim about humanity's interconnectedness "in an inescapable network of mutuality" (King, 2000, p. 64) is a beautifully articulated acknowledgement of the multi-faceted, intersectional, and relational nature of justice. King's pursuit of justice spanned a diverse landscape of issues – the social, political, cultural, economic, and spiritual domains of human existence. If his life had not been tragically cut short, his pursuits undoubtedly would have extended to environmental concerns, recognizing that marginalized communities of color also experience terrible forms of environmental racism, from the dumping of toxins to a lack of access to healthy foods. Still, given the relational view of justice that King espoused, he would have also understood that environmental threats to any one community were also harmful to all communities, as well as future generations. Most likely, King would have resonated with the claims of contemporary proponents of Eco-Justice, stating that the experiences of poverty, racism, sexism, and other social inequalities "can and must be traced to their shared foundation: the normalization of division and violence within human relationships with one another and the natural world" (Martusewicz & Johnson, 2016, p. 57).

The Eco-Justice framework (Bateson, 1972; Bowers, 2001), or what in some faith-based quarters has been called *integral ecology* (Francis, 2015; Kureethadam, 2019), offers a moral vision that consists of much more than a respect for the environment and the

"Holding the dynamic tensions between charity, justice, and the sustainability principles of Eco-Justice all in mind at once is challenging, to say the least."

natural world. Pithy phrases about "going green" or "save the whales," for all their utility at raising public awareness, fail to capture the depth and nuance of an Eco-Justice perspective and its sweeping implications for education (Bowers, 1993). Ultimately, Eco-Justice is a vision of profound interconnectedness, much like King's, inviting us to better understand "that issues of social and ecological justice are interwoven via the ways of thinking, practices, and relationships that compose identities as members of Western industrial societies" (Martusewicz & Johnson, 2016, p. 58). Beyond such a complex, systemic understanding is an extensive critique of contemporary culture. Proponents of Eco-Justice challenge

us to resist cultural norms and socialization pressures that promote "a hyper-consumeristic lifestyle based on material definitions of success and wealth, mechanistic conceptions of life processes, and hyper-separated relationships to the natural world" (Martusewicz & Edmundson, 2010, p. 73). In short, the Eco-Justice framework presents a lifestyle alternative, as Pope Francis (2015) has urged, to the pervasive "throw-away" culture and mindset that turns both people and products into readily expendable commodities.

At Saint Louis University (SLU), a similar moral vision and challenge is presented to the students and other community members who volunteer at the food recovery and outreach program, Campus Kitchen. Founded in 2001 as part of a national effort on college campuses in the United States to reduce food waste and redistribute food to those in need,

SLU's student-led chapter of Campus Kitchen has emerged as a model program for experiential learning and justice education. Akin to the far-reaching implications of Eco-Justice, Campus Kitchen's purpose has greater meaning than simply "feeding the hungry." SLU, as one of 27 U.S. institutions in the *Association for Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, prides itself on forming students' moral character, civic commitments, and spiritual values (Sokol, Sanchez, Wassel, Sweetman, & Peterson, 2021; Sweetman, Wassel, Belt, & Sokol, 2020). Accordingly, CKSLU, as the kitchen is often called, weaves together five priority areas in which volunteers are encouraged to learn and grow: 1) understanding food insecurity, 2) promoting sustainability, 3) building community relationships, 4) serving others, and 5) growing in faith-and-justice. Although CKSLU has highlighted principles of Eco-Justice across these five educational areas—including the constructive tensions embedded in personal and structural forms of justice (Sokol, Sweetman, Wassel, Franco, & Huffman, 2020)—many volunteers have nevertheless indicated more narrowly defined, and even shortsighted, reasons for their involvement. We will discuss findings from a recent survey of CKSLU volunteers that has led program leaders to re-envision their approach to "meeting students where they are" and to offer more robust learning opportunities through student-led projects that support a richer Eco-Justice vision. One of these projects—the production of a cookbook with nutritional details for simple meals and the distribution of slow-cookers and kitchen supplies to newly housed individuals who had experienced homelessness—illustrates how successful experiential learning provides students with a sense of autonomy and control, in the same way that promoting justice creates environments that mutually empower individuals (Sokol, Hammond, Kuebli, & Sweetman, 2015).

Problem Statement

As the civic engagement movement in higher education began to gain traction in the mid-1990s, Saltmarsh and Hartley (2011) noted that service-learning proponents tended to fall into one of two camps. Together, these camps have created anchor points on diverging ends of a service-learning continuum. There were those who fell firmly in the "academic neutrality" group, arguing that "the surest means of anchoring [service-learning] in the core work of the academy was to adhere to academic norms" (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011, p. 14). For these scholars and educators, service-learning resembled disciplinary-based fieldwork or clinical practica that did little to change traditional educational practices or institutional structures, nor

transform the conventional transactions between the university and community (Morton, 1995; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000). In the other camp, by contrast, were those who promoted "the notion of faculty as moral agents whose 'moral and civic imaginations' are directed at public works" (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011, p. 14). These social-change-minded educators tended to align service-learning with critical pedagogies, such as Freire's (2000) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, with the aim of disrupting the status quo and encouraging students to challenge unequal power structures and the unfair distribution of resources. Critical educators from this group have proposed distinguishing their goals from others in the service-learning discourse by calling their educational efforts "justice-learning" (Butin, 2007).

Although CKSLU's overarching commitments to Eco-Justice align best with the justice-learning side of the continuum, maintaining the tension between neutral or "traditional service-learning" and more progressive or "critical service-learning" (Mitchell, 2008) is a constructive heuristic for capturing Campus Kitchen's varied purposes. Both anchor points on the service-learning continuum illustrate the complexities and interconnections of community life on the practical level, suggesting the inadequacy of either-or formulations in "real-world" community engagement (Morton & Bergbauer, 2015). In the faith-based context of SLU, this tension resembles two expressions of "love-in-action": charity and justice (Sokol et al., 2021). Each reflects a necessary and worthy goal given the practical circumstances in which CKSLU operates, although the ultimate vision that charity and justice serve, as a whole, is the creation of a just and equitable world in which all people may thrive together.

For this two-part reason, CKSLU conducts charitable outreach, on the one hand, by distributing healthy meals to people with immediate food security needs. In doing so, they invest in the person and present moment, seeking an expeditious remedy for individuals' current state of hunger. On the other hand, CKSLU also advocates for longer-term solutions to food insecurity, particularly by modeling more sustainable relationships to food production and waste. In doing so, they subvert a persistent throwaway culture and combat the broader unjust circumstances that cause hunger and debase people's dignity. Of course, many volunteers begin their participation with CKSLU from a relatively unexamined understanding of service and justice – that is, they arrive with a simple "feeding the hungry" perspective. Holding the dynamic tensions between charity, justice, and the sustainability principles of Eco-Justice all in mind at once is challenging, to say the least.

The central issue that has emerged, therefore, is this:

How does the Campus Kitchen leadership team educate for justice in a way that captures the complex interconnectedness of the social and natural world and encourages students to grow in their resistance to a throwaway culture? What steps should be taken to shape the understanding and motivations of CKSLU volunteers to align more closely with a richer vision of Eco-Justice, capturing the mindset and practices of encountering the world and other people from a position of preserving and elevating each other's dignity?

Our method for addressing these questions was informed by the research literature in social psychology exploring volunteer motivations (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen, & Miene, 1998; Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1998), as well as scholarship originating in study of personal agency and empowerment (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Sokol et al., 2015). Two steps followed: First, we devised a questionnaire to circulate among CKSLU volunteers as a means to better assess their action motivations and potential alignment with Campus Kitchen's educational priorities; then, we explored the motivational impact, through a qualitative examination of student reflections, of special community-focused projects that promoted a sense of agency and control, both among the student leaders and community members involved. To better understand the rationale for these steps, we must set the stage with several other metrics that CKSLU has used as success indicators. CKSLU's measurement strategies, as we hope to make clear, have varied from a focus on material concerns to areas of personal growth and relationship-building.

Description of Practice

As CKSLU celebrates its 20th year, both the academically neutral and the social change sides of the service-learning/justice-learning continuum are evident. Organizationally, CKSLU is part of the University's Center for Service and Community Engagement (CSCE; now rebranded as the Center for Social Action), a team that supports a wide array of service-learning in curricular and co-curricular outlets across campus, working with faculty, students, staff, and community members. The CSCE employs a part-time coordinator to support the student leaders of CKSLU and to help ensure that community partners' needs are consistently met, particularly through the summer months, when most students are unavailable. The operational priorities of the Campus Kitchen are straightforward: (a) recover food that would normally be thrown away (promote food sustainability); and (b) repurpose that food into nutritious meals that

are then distributed to individuals in need (combat food insecurity). Both of these goals are equally important to attaining food justice and follow from faith-oriented principles elaborated in *Laudato Si'* (Francis, 2015), a document circulated by the Roman Catholic Church to address a growing throwaway culture. As the document outlines: "We know that approximately a third of all food produced is discarded, and whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor" (Francis, 2015, pp. 35–36). To put this claim in context for CKSLU volunteers, in St. Louis City specifically, nearly one out of four residents of the city meet criteria for being food insecure, including 13,970 children. With a similar percentage of the city's population (24.2%) living below the poverty line, many members of the community must choose between buying food and providing for other basic needs, such as housing and health care. Such food insecurity is exacerbated by the fact that 54.9% of St. Louis residents live in a food desert, an area that has limited access to affordable and healthy food (Incarnate Word Foundation, 2020), including neighborhoods immediately adjacent to SLU's campus. Concomitantly, around 40% of food is wasted in the USA annually (Spiegel, 2019), with the vast majority ending up in landfills. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (2021) reports that wasted food is the "the single largest category of material placed in landfills," representing nutrition that "could have helped feed families in need."

Material Metrics: Food Recovery and Redistribution

Campus Kitchen accomplishes the first goal of food recovery in a robust way, recovering an average of 1,000 pounds of food each week that would normally be thrown out. This food is collected from a Trader Joe's grocery store as well as SLU on-campus dining services. Examples of recovered food include a five-pound bag of apples in which one apple is rotten, or a dozen eggs in which one is cracked. On campus, CKSLU recovers such things as sandwiches and fruit that are too close to the "best by" date to be sold and pans of leftover food from the students' dining halls. Campus Kitchen is also partnered with the St. Louis Area Food Bank as a designated recipient for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which includes food that is sold to the federal government from US farmers and producers. Altogether, in 2020, CKSLU recovered a total of 50,000 pounds of food.

Campus Kitchen then uses the recovered food to cook about 400 meals each week and deliver them to seven community partners, including transitional housing programs, apartments for elderly and dis-

abled individuals, and emergency homeless shelters. An additional three non-profit organizations are given fresh, uncooked food that is used to provide groceries to their own clients. Nearly 600 individuals are fed each week through the efforts of CKSLU, and in 2020, a total of 21,000 meals were delivered – all from food that would have otherwise gone to waste.

However, the principal means of evaluating program success is not just based on “pounds-of-food-recovered” or “meals-served.” Certainly, after 20 years, CKSLU can take stock in these numbers, nevertheless it risks diluting the experience by focusing too much on a predetermined materialistic goal. As part of a bigger educational effort of the CSCE, Campus Kitchen must also provide an environment that is ripe for community-based learning experiences in which the one doing the serving and one being served encounter each other within a framework of respect, reciprocity, relevance, and reflection (Butin, 2007, p. 177). These experiences embrace other priorities of relationship-building and faith-and-justice, focus on the process of questioning and disrupting commonplace assumptions, and set up Campus Kitchen as a service-learning site that educates for justice.

When Campus Kitchen first began at SLU in 2001, it was a neat trick to take food that was going to be thrown out and turn it into a nutritious meal. But through the lens of Eco-Justice, it does not seem so clever. Instead, the critical consciousness formed by an enriched Eco-Justice perspective now highlights a troubling pattern of connections. The heart of Campus Kitchen’s operations trade on cultural conventions and social norms that attach misguided meanings to material excess. Some of CKSLU’s volunteers have questioned whether “recovered-food” is only good enough for people who cannot afford food. This is far from the case. If anything, an abundance of food, and the relative ease of its disposal in landfills, represents a disturbing position of privilege in a throwaway culture. Finally, through an Eco-Justice lens, CKSLU’s material metrics of success are perversely tied to food industry standards that tend to be driven more by money-making pressures of a market economy than authentic concerns for sustaining people’s nutrition and wellbeing (Wilkinson, 2021). Such critical realizations point to the need for CKSLU to balance material indicators like “pounds-of-food-recovered” with person-centered and relational markers of evaluation. Indeed, the interconnections revealed by Eco-Justice has entailed re-framing CKSLU’s assessment strategies, drawing greater attention to dynamic tensions and places for better alignment.

Personal Metrics: Motivational and Educational Alignment

Campus Kitchen’s educational priorities have not always matched the personal motivations of volunteers. Clary and Snyder (1999) have provided compelling evidence that sustained patterns of volunteerism and community engagement “depend on the interaction of person-based dynamics and situational opportunities” (p. 159). Their program of research (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen, & Miene, 1998; Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1998) has identified six major motivational factors for volunteers, including alignment with values, understanding, personal growth, career aspirations, social connection, and psychological well-being. These personal motivations, at a general level, parallel most of the particular educational areas that CKSLU has worked to prioritize. Obviously, given the educational context of Campus Kitchen and SLU – the relevant “situational opportunities,” as Clary and Snyder (1999) would say—there is a more specific emphasis placed on food justice and faith-based concerns. Again, these are: 1) understanding food insecurity, 2) promoting sustainability, 3) building community relationships, 4) serving others, and 5) growing in faith-and-justice. To explore the alignment or “fit” between these areas, the CKSLU leadership team developed a 30-item questionnaire to circulate among its student volunteers. Students were asked to rate their level of agreement, on a 5-point scale, to questions in the five areas. The goal was to generate two questions for each: one associated with beliefs and motivations and one related to taking action. For instance, the two items associated with the priority area of valuing and practicing sustainability were: 1) How relevant is the value of sustainability in shaping your commitment to community service? and 2) How committed are you to reducing food waste in your own daily practices? Ratings were combined to create an aggregated score for each of the CKSLU priorities.

Fifty-four completed questionnaires were returned, with balanced representation from a range of students, including first-timers and seasoned-veteran volunteers. The majority of respondents (just over 70%) were women, but this is consistent with the overall CKSLU volunteer base, which is predominantly women. The average age of the respondents was 19-years-old, and most volunteered at least once a week, if not more.

In addition to asking volunteers about each area, they also rank-ordered the CKSLU priorities, as they understood them, in relation to their own personal

motivations. “Serving others,” not surprisingly, was a top motivator (see Figure 1). SLU’s service narrative is a salient thread in all University programs, and many students attend SLU because of the many service opportunities the institution provides. Nevertheless, because CKSLU’s goal is to educate students regarding the nuanced meanings of service and justice, a more rigorous examination of volunteers’ mindsets was necessary. Accordingly, in the bar graph of rankings, the location of “growing in faith-and-justice” and “valuing sustainability” (both near the bottom) provided a more meaningful place to begin our inquiry.

Together, these two areas represent the primary focus of CKSLU’s educational messaging, yet students treat them as secondary in their personal motivational priorities. Importantly, the rankings did not differ significantly by students’ frequency and time volunteering at CKSLU, nor did they differ based on other demographics like enrollment status, age, or gender. Given the spiritual exploration and meaning-making known to arise during the college years (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011; Barry & Abo-Zena, 2014; Smith & Snell, 2009), these findings make some sense, even if perhaps disappointing from a perspective of SLU’s faith-based values. Many emerging adults in higher education contexts, as Parks (1991) has noted, are working to free their conceptions of faith from a “too facile equation with religion and belief” and reconnecting it to “trust, meaning, and truth” (p. 10). In the “faith-and-justice” framing of spirituality in Catholic, Jesuit education, students often resonate much more with the justice-side of

this formulation than the faith-side. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the one questionnaire item which directly emphasized justice (How active are you in advocating for the rights of vulnerable or marginalized people?) had a very high level of agreement (mean 3.54) with 55% of respondents indicating a 4 or a 5. Whereas the item that referenced faith-and-spirituality most explicitly saw the opposite pattern (mean of 2.85) with nearly 45% of respondents indicating only a 1 or 2 (see Figure 1).

The news about Campus Kitchen’s success in meeting its top educational priorities, however, is not all bad, especially if delving into responses to other questionnaire items. For instance, the highest score for any of the questions – a mean of 4.39 – was to “How clear has Campus Kitchen’s priority to reduce food waste been during your involvement with its outreach?” Volunteers, as a whole, agreed that CKSLU is effective in communicating a commitment to reducing food waste, even if at an individual level they do not rank food sustainability practices as their highest personal motivator. Examining the means for the aggregated scores in each of the areas provides further clarity. As shown in Figure 2, food sustainability and understanding food insecurity were the two highest scores, and follow-up analyses indicated these differ statistically from all but one of the relationship-building areas.

All together, these data shed light on places of both promise and improvement in volunteer mindsets and CKSLU’s educational priorities. They also



Figure 1: Respondents’ Rankings of Priorities

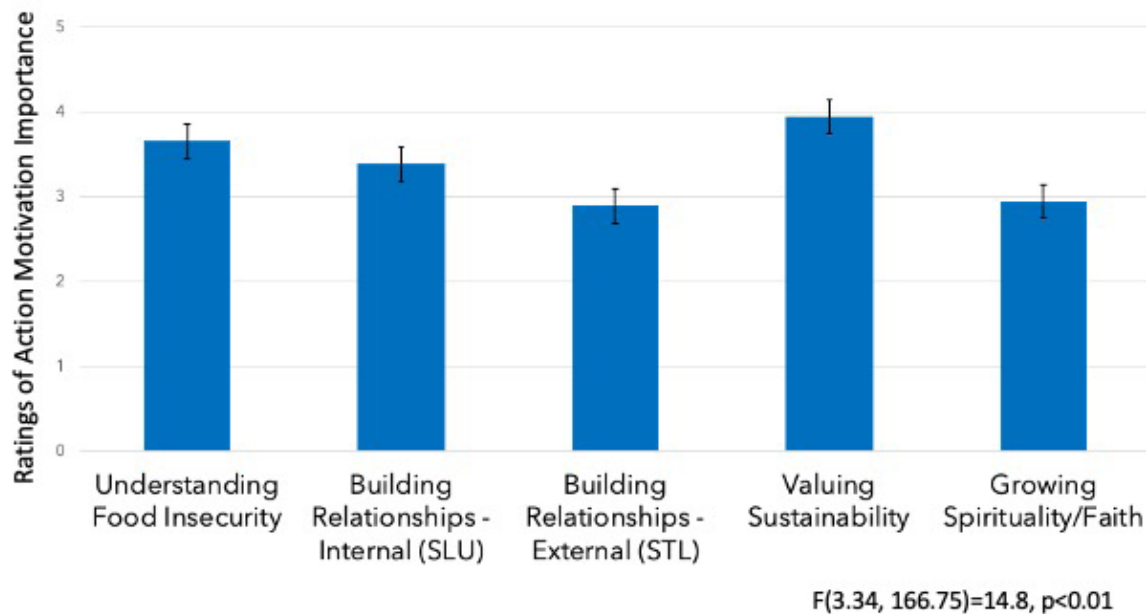


Figure 2: Respondents' Action Motivations

point to the varied motivations that volunteers hold and the importance of working from these to achieve a better alignment in meeting service-learning goals.

Relational Metrics: Personal and Communal Agency

Moving yet another step beyond the material metrics of food distribution, CKSLU recognizes that hunger is not simply an empty stomach, and has worked in various ways to combat the sense of isolation that food insecurity creates. These efforts have taken the form of pen-pal letter exchanges, monthly game nights, holiday baking sessions, and a community art installation—all in an effort to foster more meaningful personal relationships between the volunteers and the neighbors that they serve. Among the questionnaire findings, the item dealing with “making connections among fellow volunteers” had a mean score of 3.91, the second highest score of all the motivation-related items. Indeed, food is a powerful motivator for relationship-building and community: the notion of “breaking bread” and companionship share a common etymological root (com=together and panis=bread). Sharing food with others represents a moment of shared humanity and a reliance on one another for growth. In the research literature on motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), such moments reflect a basic psychological need for relatedness, or a sense of belonging. The human motivation to experience relatedness and community “concerns the universal propensity to interact with, be connected to, and experience caring for other people” (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004, p. 25). Still, the psychological motivation to be in community is also held in tension

with an opposing psychological need for autonomy, or sense of agency and control. Autonomy refers to the need to experience volition and choice when acting, to feel in control and to act in accord with one’s values and interests (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004). Human well-being has sometimes been framed as a healthy balance between community and autonomy, a duality of communion-and-agency (Bakan, 1966; Sokol et al., 2015; Wiggins, 1991).

Preserving this balance or tension in CKSLU’s special projects has emerged as another educational priority, particularly with new opportunities for students to apply for small seed grants through the Center for Service and Community Engagement. The grants—called *1818 Community Engagement Grants* to recognize the year SLU was founded—are designed to engage students’ passions and provide more tailored mentorship and leadership training. They are also designed to encourage deeper community collaborations and a sense of mutuality in the partnerships that are formed. Not everyone’s passions and interests are the same. Some love cooking, some enjoy photography and storytelling, others contribute to Campus Kitchen’s new garden boxes to harvest fresh vegetables and herbs. Providing multiple options and opportunities to create new relationships and grow partnership possibilities has become an attractive way to engage more students and promote their sense of autonomy. One project that grew out of students’ homelessness outreach during the COVID-19 pandemic built even more on this intrinsic motivation for autonomy and control, empowering not only the students involved, but also their unhoused friends in the community.

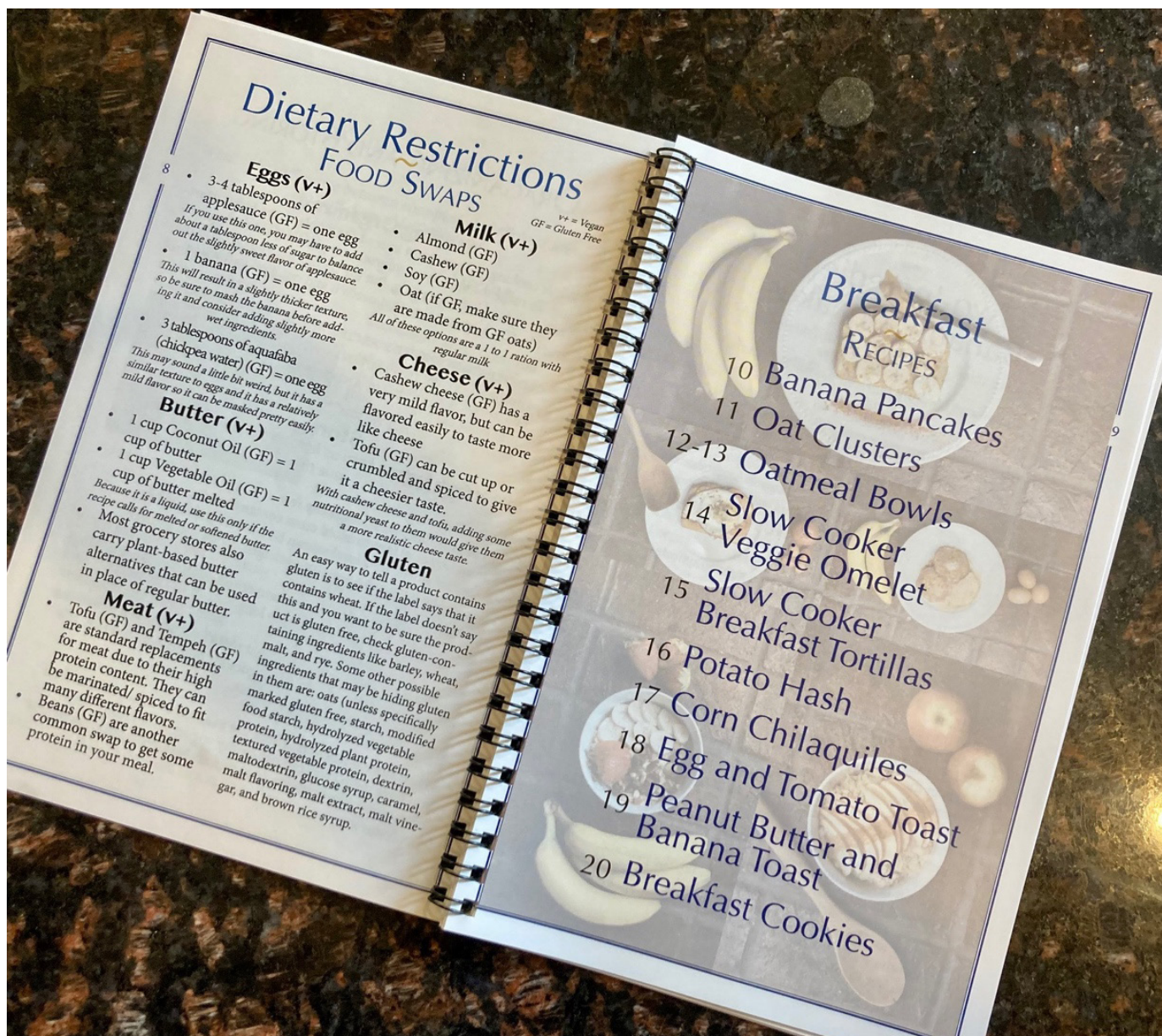


Figure 3: No Stress Cookbook

The “No Stress Cooking” Cookbook was the culmination of an 1818 Grant that drew together a team of eleven students partnered with the organization, Tent Mission STL, to create a collection of recipes for inexpensive, but nutritious, meal options. The cookbooks were distributed with a new electric slow-cooker, pots and pans, and grocery supplies to community members who were transitioning from living on the streets to new homes as part of St. Louis’ “Housing First” model. The model is built on the premise that individuals experiencing homelessness are more successful if they begin with secure housing, and then, from a stable-base, seek out social services for further support. The cookbook and kitchen supplies served as a housewarming gift, as well as a means to support independent living. The eleven students designed the cookbooks based

on their own individual skills and interests. Beyond recipe writing, some students offered food-safety and money-saving tips, some gathered nutritional and cost information to include with the recipes, and others prepared the recipes to photograph and layout in an appealing glossy-paged book. As one student leader remarked in a reflection activity following the project:

People deserve their autonomy with their food. Nothing is better than a home-cooked meal. By bringing groceries, rather than meals, people can choose what they want and how they want to make it. By providing crockpots, people can cook even if they don’t have appliances, utensils, or vast cooking knowledge. This project was intended to be comprehensive and holistic, promoting the autonomy of oneself, especially after having that autonomy stripped away by living with a survival mindset.

Importantly, the students have discussed how they plan to continue the project, maintaining closer relationships with recipients of the cookbook and supplies. They hope to get continuous feedback from these people regarding their food preferences and needs. They intend to recruit nutrition and dietetics students to help provide additional expertise and guide selections for even healthier foods. They are exploring other sources of funding to expand from crockpots to other items, such as meat thermometers, microwaves, and small kitchen appliances. Finally, motivated by a desire to avoid creating a context of dependency, they plan to educate people about available food pantries and ways to seek other forms of assistance, like SNAP and WIC, so they can continue to make personal choices about their sources of nutrition. A participating student reflected that:

... in many realms of giving, people say 'beggars can't be choosers.' We asked, why not? Why take away someone's autonomy when easy steps can be taken to preserve it? While some may answer that there are not enough resources, we continue to probe: if we have resources (even limited ones), we should be giving people options. This act of maintaining choices grows trust and deepens relationships.

Implications for Teaching and Learning

The revered college basketball coach, John Wooden, is credited with saying, "Don't mistake activity with achievement." While there are many benefits to experiential learning opportunities, scholars and educators have remained wary of assuming that the "mere doing" in service-learning contexts is sufficient to promote personal, moral, and civic growth (Hart, Matsuba, & Atkins, 2008). Adopting additional means to guide and set meaning-making parameters on students' learning is needed. The metrics and findings from experiences at CKSLU are illustrative of what some of this guidance could look like.

1. Serve a broad, integrative vision and look beyond markers of material success. Although meeting the nutritional needs of SLU's neighboring communities is important for Campus Kitchen, its priorities follow from an even richer vision of Eco-Justice that aims to transform people's hearts and minds and cultivate a life-long commitment to justice. Success in meeting this vision requires understanding complex volunteer motivations and thoughtful relationship-building, as well as igniting individuals' passions and creating autonomy-granting opportunities for their pursuit.

2. Honor the dignity of all stakeholders and tailor programmatic goals to the interests of students and community members. The pursuit of justice involves an awareness of the complex interconnections and relationships that join people to the social and natural world. Creating "right relationships" (Sokol et al., 2021) that promote equity and well-being within these networks is an ongoing process that requires constant attention to the dynamics of the social context and the unique characteristics of individuals. CKSLU inhabits a small part of a system of relationships dealing with food and people, but it takes great care to create an environment that empowers individuals, provides a space for giving and making personal choices, and increasingly encourages all stakeholders to serve themselves, whether in the nutritional options for community members or the educational goals of students.

3. Allow for mixed motivations and creative tensions to further promote personal growth and sustain life-long learning. Famed educator and activist, Parker Palmer (2011) argued that democratic citizenship depended on "learning to hold tension creatively" (p. 71) in the public sphere in order to "generate a sense of personal voice and agency" and to further "strengthen our capacity to create community" (p. 45). Optimal experiential learning similarly requires an openness to mixed motivations and understandings (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1998), but also demands intentional efforts to shape individuals' ongoing critical reflection in relation to broader frames of meaning, such as Eco-Justice. A significant practical outcome for CKSLU's assessments has been the creation of a new leadership position on the student-led executive team, the Vice President for Service-Learning and Scholarship. The responsibilities of this position are to develop and implement reflection opportunities and to share educational resources at every volunteer shift in the kitchen, as well as make presentations to other student groups across campus and encourage increased political advocacy for food justice policies.

4. Approach tensions between charity-and-justice as a "both-and" rather than an "either-or." Although charitable actions risk the danger of sustaining the status quo and the broken systems that perpetuate need and waste, justice must balance both structural and personal dimensions. "Justice captures notions of inclusion, community, and well-being as they are embodied in both personal interactions and in societal structures" (Sokol et al. 202, p. 45). Practically speaking, this means responding to the basic needs of individuals, treating them with respect and care, and,

if the situation requires, providing food, clothing, and shelter. Still, in all of these acts of charity, advocates for justice must never lose sight of longer-term solutions to promoting community well-being and individual thriving. This means advocating for structural changes to systems that deprive people of their dignity, freedom, and ability to support themselves. Campus Kitchen's commitment to food justice is a "both-and" formulation – a recipe for justice – that ensures people are fed, relationships are valued, and throwaway attitudes and systems are subverted.

Next Steps

Beyond the implications for teaching and learning, the student reflections and questionnaire findings have provided critical insight into CKSLU volunteers' mindsets, especially the nuance of their motivations. Still, given the typical age of most college students, CKSLU's questions to volunteers may have neglected a central source of motivation: the need to belong to something greater than oneself, or a sense of 'self-transcendence' (Sokol, Chandler, Hammond, McEnerney, & Marle, 2018). Psychologists who study identity-formation (Lightfoot, 1997; Marcia, 1980; Youniss & Yates, 1997) have long noted that adolescents and young adults are primed to benefit from opportunities that intersect with issues of identity, personal responsibility, and authentic action (Arnett, 1998; Finlay, Wray-Lake, & Flanagan, 2010), particularly as they begin to imagine themselves as future members of society. Next steps in better understanding CKSLU volunteers will look less at whether they have embraced a vision of Eco-Justice and more at how they envision themselves and their personal role in the pursuit of justice, or what Martin Luther King, Jr. (2011) described as the long "arc of the moral universe." Many young people, as Youniss and Yates (1997) have highlighted, seek a sense of greater purpose. Far from fitting the stereotypes of being irresponsible and self-absorbed, "youth are concerned about the society they will inherit and have to decide how they can best relate to it" (Youniss & Yates, 1997, p. 22). Given our current historical position in MLK's "moral arc" and the salience of the Black Lives Matter movement in the collective consciousness of young people, a central concern for CKSLU volunteers, who by and large identify as white, has to involve examining their own implicit biases in relation to the renewed energy behind diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts on university campuses. At SLU, in particular, this examination has led to re-situating the Center for Service and Community Engagement and CKSLU into a newly re-organized and re-branded *Division for Diversity and Innovative Community Engagement*,

which launched in the fall of 2021. Although many higher education institutions have offices devoted to promoting diversity and inclusion, universities must take care to avoid formulaic, cookie-cutter solutions that fail to build true inclusive excellence and community. With CKSLU's enduring commitment to and rich experience with relationship-building, its participation in SLU's institutional-level DEI efforts offers a practical model for creating a robust inclusive community around principles of creativity, agency, well-being, and justice. Moreover, CKSLU illustrates how students can become leaders in these efforts.

The spirit of Eco-Justice that CKSLU has embraced points to the many benefits of experiential learning programs that promote holistic understanding and an interconnected vision of social justice. Campus Kitchen is fundamentally about creating new and more equitable ways of relating to food and community life, and combating the excesses of a "throwaway culture" that threaten our present ability to thrive and our future life together on this planet. As noted in the introduction, however, the Eco-Justice framework is capacious enough to challenge attitudes that perpetuate anti-communal norms and "isms" of all kinds. For SLU's Campus Kitchen volunteers especially, this has led to much deeper realizations about the ways their personal choices and actions can impact others, both positively and negatively, in the broader pursuit of justice. At the heart of these realizations is the hard fact: if we fail to critically analyze and reflect on our actions, or wrestle with issues of identity and privilege and what truly motivates us, we risk not only being ineffective in our community service, but also damaging to the relationships we hope to build in caring for others and our common home. Whatever recipe for justice we have offered by exploring the teaching and learning implications of Campus Kitchen, we must constantly examine and be willing to adjust our relationships if we hope to truly nourish ourselves and our communities. ■

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Implementing an Experiential Learning Program Focused on Civic Leadership to Produce Social Justice Outcomes

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Introduction

These are troubling times for our nation and particularly for our democracy. The past few years have provided ample evidence that American democracy is at risk. The nation is deeply divided along partisan lines, some political leaders seemingly embrace mob rule, and voter suppression efforts have escalated. On January 6, 2021, the world witnessed a violent attack on the United States Capitol, which shook our democracy to its foundations. At the same time, racial and social injustice remains rampant, and cynicism has become pervasive among American citizens.

The “new crisis in democracy” (Flores & Rogers, 2019, p. 1) has clearly worsened, and the need for higher education to respond meaningfully has become more urgent (see McGuire, 2021). The January 6 assault on American democracy created an inflection point for higher education. Indeed, events over the past four years or so signaled “another crucible moment” for colleges and universities (Flores & Rogers, 2019, p. 11). The much-cited “crucible moment” of 2012 came in the wake of citizen passivity and a downward spiral in public confidence in the nation’s political institutions (National Task Force, 2012). That troubling situation led to a national call to action in making college students’ civic learning and democratic engagement an educational priority and a means of strengthening democracy.

A large number of higher education institutions throughout the United States responded to the national call by instituting strategies and programs to foster civic engagement and democratic renewal. The University of Maryland, Baltimore County, for instance, sought to fulfill the “holistic aspirations” of *A Crucible Moment* (National Task Force, 2012) by “supporting and deepening a rich, humane culture

of engagement through careful organizing, curricular and co-curricular experimentation, and storytelling” (Berger et al., 2020, para. 7). Meanwhile, the Center for Public Deliberation at a large university in Colorado ratcheted up its work in enhancing democracy locally through improved public communication and community problem-solving (Colorado State University, n.d.); and California State University, Monterey Bay, leveraged its service-learning program to advance social justice and equity (Ochoa, 2019).

Over time, the efforts at many higher education institutions lost momentum and the much-sought-after democratic renewal proved somewhat elusive. Understandably, then, institutional leaders have called attention to the urgency of recommitting higher education to the public good (e.g., Cantor, 2020; Carcasson, 2019). For some institutions, civic engagement through experiential learning holds the key to preparing students for active participation in advancing this nation’s democratic institutions and processes. One such institution has established a program that is the subject of this article.

Institutional Context and Focus of Inquiry

This inquiry examined fundamental elements of a civic learning and leadership development program for undergraduates at Barry University, a Catholic institution in Miami, Florida. Founded in 1940 by the Adrian Dominican Sisters, Barry prides itself on inspiring students to foster positive change in the community, from local to global. According to the university’s mission statement, “a Barry education and university experience foster individual and communal transformation where learning leads to knowledge and truth, reflection leads to informed action, and a commitment to social justice leads to collaborative service” (Barry University, 2008, para. 2).

Classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as a community-engaged institution, Barry recently institutionalized experiential learning as the fulcrum of a strategy to foster personal and social responsibility among undergraduates. The university's Center for Community Service Initiatives (CCSI)—currently celebrating its 10th anniversary—functions as the coordinating unit for community-focused experiential learning programs and related faculty development. The CCSI plays a key role in preparing students to be engaged, productive citizens.

Focused on civic learning and leadership development, the Barry Service Corps (BSC) Fellows Program aims to foster civic mindedness and, in the process, prepare students to become agents of social change. According to Steinberg et al. (2011), civic mindedness is “a person's inclination or disposition to be knowledgeable of and involved in the community, and to have a commitment to act upon a sense of responsibility as a member of that community” (p. 20). The program equips student leaders primarily for engagement with marginalized populations in underserved communities (Bowen & Berrien, 2020).

“During training sessions, students learn how a diverse set of identities intersect and affect an individual's lived experience and well-being.”

In this inquiry, we were interested in examining the practice-based approach to the program by describing the main components and the implementation procedure. Although an in-depth analysis of the outcomes of the program was not part of this inquiry, we were also interested in highlighting a few outcomes that would indicate the extent to which the program demonstrates effective practices in civic learning and social justice education. In addition, we would identify the challenges encountered in implementing the program and specify the implications for practice.

Experiential Learning Strategy and Components

The BSC Fellows Program is implemented as a cocurricular experiential learning initiative characterized by a social justice orientation. Cocurricular initiatives are programs, projects, and events that complement the curriculum. Developed and organized intentionally as learning experiences, they augment course content and enrich classroom experiences (Bowen, 2021). At Barry University, *experiential learning* is treated as largely synonymous with *active learning*. *Experiential learning* is defined as “a process in which students acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and values in a relevant setting . . . [and which] involves linking theory to practice through student engagement complemented

by critical reflection” (Barry University, 2014, p. 12).

Social Justice Framework

The university's experiential learning initiatives are usually placed within a social justice framework. Social justice is viewed as “the state of institutional or structural arrangements in which there are no inequalities that are unjustifiable in terms of the greater social good or that are imposed unfairly” (Marullo & Edwards 2000, p. 899). As Cohen et al. (2001) have explained, social justice entails efforts to influence outcomes, including public policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions, that directly affect people's lives. In this vein, experiential learning toward social justice reflects complexities of both the process and the goals, with specific experiential strategies being focused on the community while engaging complex and contested issues (Butin, 2007). Additionally, experiential learning with a service component can encourage students to see themselves as social change agents who respond to injustice in communities (Mitchell, 2008).

In accordance with the social justice framework, students learn about the systems of power and privilege that produce social inequalities; they critically explore factors related to such inequalities (e.g., race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation). Further, students learn to work collaboratively with others, banding together to challenge inequities and to seek solutions to social issues by analyzing the root causes of the identified issues (Bowen, 2021).

Each academic year, the CCSI selects students to form a cohort of about 20 program participants. To be eligible for selection, students must be undergraduates who express interest in civic engagement and social justice and must show a propensity for leadership. Consideration for diversity within the cohort is a significant part of the recruitment process. Program administrators purposefully select students to produce a diverse mix in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, and experience.

The BSC Fellows Program, which was launched in 2013, includes specialized training and mentorship for civic leadership development. The intensive training provided by campus and community leaders and year-round support from CCSI staff prepare students to fulfill three requirements that constitute major components of the program:



Figure 1: Barry Service Corps Fellows Program Components

community engagement program support, collaboration with community partners, and focused projects (Bowen & Berrien, 2020; see Figure 1). We will look at each program component in turn.

Civic Leadership Development

Civic learning and civic leadership are the twin elements of education for civic engagement practice through cocurricular experiential learning at Barry. For this university, *civic engagement* means individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern (Bowen, 2018). The civic competencies for the program are based on the six “braids” of Musil’s (2009) “civic learning spiral:” (1) knowledge acquisition and generation, (2) civic skills, (3) civic values, (4) self-awareness and attitudes, (5) community and cultural awareness, and (6) public action. It is important for students to acquire civic knowledge—the fundamental understanding of the structure of government and the processes by which government enacts policies and makes laws. They should also develop civic skills—the ability to participate as active, responsible citizens in a democracy. And they should embrace civic values—the standards and principles that shape one’s moral and civic compass and affect one’s “disposition towards matters that have implications for a fair and just society” (Lott & Eagan, 2011, p. 33).

The program facilitators take the BSC Fellows beyond the fundamentals of civic learning by covering such key concepts as *cultural competence* and *intersectionality* (see Figure 2). To build cultural competence, students are provided with the opportunity to examine their cultural experiences and to discuss their own biases. Year after year, the program administrators have noted that the vast majority of BSC Fellows were unfamiliar with the term *intersectionality* (see Crenshaw, 2016); therefore, the facilitators are always prepared to devote several experiential learning activities to elucidating the concept.

During training sessions, students learn how a diverse set of identities intersect and affect an individual’s lived experience and well-being. Intersecting identities include most, if not all, of the “Big 10” social identity markers: race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic status, physical appearance, and immigration status. The facilitators guide students in confronting stereotypes and assumptions and in finding common values among cohort members. The students come to understand that social identity is complex and that oppressive institutions are interconnected and therefore cannot be properly examined in isolation.

Moreover, the program facilitators delve into civic leadership, drawing on the Higher Education Research Institute’s (1996) social change model of leadership development as well as the work of Kouzes and Posner (2017), who described five practices of exemplary leadership. As emphasized in the social change model, leadership is concerned with effecting positive change through collaborative efforts. Kouzes and Posner’s leadership practices are as follows: *Model the way*, *inspire a shared vision*, *challenge the process*, *enable others to act*, and *encourage the heart*. The BSC Fellows,

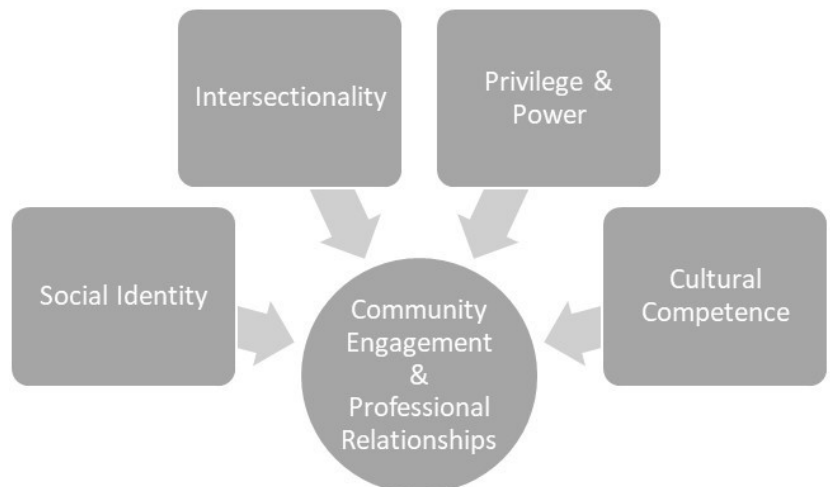


Figure 2: Key Concepts of Civic Learning

as emerging leaders, explore these practices through various experiential learning activities. For example, to lay the foundation for modeling the way, they complete a “Values Checklist,” identifying values that they consider very important, somewhat important, or not important (Bowen, 2018). Workshops are an avenue for BSC Fellows to acquire knowledge of social issues affecting communities. Through facilitated discussions, the student leaders explore the complexity of a social issue—its historical, sociological, cultural, and political contexts; its causes, effects, and how it intersects with other issues (Bowen, 2021).

Experiential learning activities such as role-plays, simulations, and games provide opportunities for them to practice civic skills, including effective communication, critical thinking, and the ability to organize and persuade others to take action. Here are three examples of experiential learning activities that have served their purposes well

- Simulation ‘Training Systems’ ‘BaFá BaFá’ is an activity intended to help participants understand how culture affects each person’s behavior and what is required of each person to live or work with people who have different values, work styles, and worldviews. Participants learn to work across difference, read nonverbal communication, reflect on cultural humility, and consider context when working with community-based organizations.
- “Animal Game” involves the assignment of animal identities (i.e., cat, dog, mice, and goldfish) to participants. Roughly half are dogs, half are cats, two are mice, and one is a goldfish. The participants are instructed to stand in a circle and keep their eyes closed. Each makes the assigned animal sound (at the typical volume) and moves about, with eyes still closed, finding others who are the same “animal.” The dogs and cats are dominant; the mice and fish tend to be unnoticed and intimidated. This game demonstrates dominance and marginalization, with students reflecting on which voices are heard and unheard in communities; and it builds empathy for marginalized people.
- “Forced Choice” is an experiential exercise that allows students to reflect on their positionality while learning the concepts of *social identity* and *intersectionality*. This activity is also effective for teambuilding.

In addition, students sharpen their leadership skills by serving on event planning and institutional governance committees on campus. They also share their work and hone their presentation skills at local, national, and international conferences—notably Campus Compact state-level conferences, the IMPACT National Conference, and the annual conference of the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE).

Community Engagement Program Support

The BSC Fellows assist with facilitation of other programs, projects, and events coordinated by the CCSI. For example, they serve as community-based project assistants and service-learning reflection facilitators especially on designated days of service and during alternative breaks. The student leaders also assist with the physical arrangements for events such as the public forums that comprise each academic year’s Deliberative Dialogue Series organized by the CCSI.

Collaboration with Community Partners

During the cohort’s orientation, the new BSC Fellows take part in a preliminary experiential learning exercise during which they individually indicate the social issue (or social justice issue) that is most important to them. Later, the BSC Fellows are assigned to social justice teams; each team concentrates on a specific social issue and is matched with select community organizations.

During training sessions, to ensure that the emerging leaders can engage effectively and ethically with community partners, the program facilitators emphasize power dynamics. The participants discuss approaches to understanding the experiences of the most marginalized groups in society and ways of redressing social issues and citizen grievances. Additionally, the BSC Fellows learn that they will be approaching the community from a position of privilege. They also learn the importance of avoiding “colonial and disempowering practices in civic engagement” and of helping to build “relationships of mutuality and reciprocity” (Bowen & Berrien, 2020, p. 173).

Their collaboration with community partners involves direct service as well as the application of social change methods such as grassroots/community organizing, popular education, advocacy, and public action. The student leaders tackle social issues as viewed through a structural/systemic change lens. In this regard, they explore the root causes of the issue before working collaboratively with community partners to address the issue. The students understand

that taking action without identifying the factors that contribute to the issue can result in misdirected efforts while wasting resources. Before taking public action, for instance, the student leaders engage in issue exploration, coalition building, and direct-action organizing.

One experiential learning activity that has proven useful for explaining structural/systemic social change involves the story of the Babies in the River. Below is an abridged version of the story.

Once upon a time in a riverside village, a woman noticed a shocking sight: a drowning baby, crying his lungs out, being washed downriver. She rushed to save the baby, rescuing him just before he went over the falls at the edge of town. The next day, there were two babies in the river; the day after, three more, then four. With the help of her neighbors, the woman saved them, too. When babies kept washing downstream, the villagers banded together, setting up a 24-hour rescue watch. Still the babies kept coming. So, the villagers installed an elaborate alarm system and strung safety nets across the river, but they were still overwhelmed trying to save the babies.

The BSC Fellows suggest and discuss various approaches to the situation. In the end, they grasp the importance of long-term, systemic solutions to social issues rather than responding simply with charity. (If some of the villagers go upstream and find out why babies are ending up in the river, then other villagers would not have to keep rescuing babies downstream.)

Among the social change methods, advocacy and public action are popular practices at Barry. For example, BSC Fellows have engaged in advocacy to address hunger by participating in Bread for the World's Racial Wealth Gap Simulation and the organization's Offering of Letters to Congress. And BSC Fellows have been at the forefront of public demonstrations, agitating for food retailers to support the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' Fair Food Program (Bowen, 2021). For their part, community partners function as service site managers and coeducators for civic learning and leadership development.

Issue-Focused Projects

Fulfilling another requirement of the program, the students engage in projects focused on salient social (justice) issues. The projects call for research, planning, implementation, and presentation. Students show creativity in their projects, which have dealt with a variety of issues, from educational disparities and health inequities to farmworker exploitation and food insecurity. As noted by Bowen and Berrien

(2020), some BSC Fellows focused their projects on the needs of resettled refugees, the poor treatment of incarcerated women, and the injustice meted out to racial minority groups. The student leaders present the outcomes of their projects at Barry's annual Community Engagement Symposium.

Outcomes of Civic Learning for Social Justice

The assessment of learning outcomes (i.e., the BSC Fellows' demonstration of civic competencies) involves the use of three validated instruments: the Civic-Minded Graduate (CMG) Scale, the CMG Narrative Prompt, and the CMG Interview Protocol with associated evaluation rubrics (Steinberg et al., 2011). Assessments have shown that students generally become civic-minded graduates who demonstrate the capacity and desire to work with others for social change. In the process, they acquire the knowledge, develop the skills, and embrace the values that reflect their readiness for the role of social change agents.

Evidence of their preparedness for social change agency has been found in their declarative responses to the CMG Narrative Prompt, which states: "I have a responsibility and a commitment to use the knowledge and skills I have gained as a college student to collaborate with others, who may be different from me, to help address issues in society."

One of the BSC Fellows declared:

I feel a natural sense of moral responsibility to share [information about social issues] because I know that too many of my peers know less about these issues. I have established myself among my peers as someone who can discuss social issues with passion and educate others. Hopefully . . . they will become inspired and see the importance of becoming involved in the political process . . . and to embark on long-term, progressive change.

Further, a BSC Fellow, who accepted a leadership role in a national alliance to help secure a better deal for farmworkers, produced literature and other resources for use by her successors. One of her cohort members developed a mechanism to help resettling refugees navigate the local health-care system. Two BSC Fellows started a student organization as part of Barry's Campus Democracy Project to promote civic learning and democratic engagement, including participation in electoral processes at the federal, state, and local levels. Also, over the years, several BSC Fellows have traveled to the state capitol (Tallahassee, Florida) and to Capitol Hill (Washington, D.C.) to speak with legislators.

Program Implementation Challenges and Implications

In implementing the BSC Fellows Program, the administrators and facilitators have encountered a few challenges. All of these challenges have implications for practice, which experiential learning program organizers at other universities may find instructive.

First, it is somewhat challenging to maintain the program as truly cocurricular (complementing the curriculum) rather than extracurricular (unconnected to the curriculum). This is because course instructors are not administrators or facilitators of the BSC Fellows Program, and the components of the program do not properly align with course content. The clear implication is that a procedure is necessary to connect aspects of cocurricular experiential learning directly to at least a few courses that students will likely take while in the program. This may require some negotiation between program planners and course instructors. At the very least, students should be encouraged to integrate and transfer learning from courses to their cocurricular experiential learning activities and vice versa.

Second, students' class schedules and academic demands sometimes prevent them from attending some program-related events or completing certain assigned tasks in a timely manner; and, at times, students and community partners have conflicting schedules. Building flexibility into the schedule as well as implementing parts of the program on weekends usually addresses that challenge.

Third, because students enjoy direct service, which typically makes them see their fruits of their labor almost immediately, advocacy sometimes seem like less-rewarding work. Consequently, from time to time, some students in the program try to cut corners and do not spend enough time on advocacy processes. Advocacy does take time, and responses from decision-makers may be slow. Nevertheless, advocacy is a tried-and-true method of influencing policies and decisions within political, economic, and social spheres (Cohen et al., 2001). Offering a mix of opportunities for direct service, advocacy, and public action is an effective practice that students will appreciate.

Fourth, the critical reflection process is not always as effective as it should be; students sometimes give superficial responses rather than reflect deeply on their civic engagement. In a social justice context, it is important that students reflect critically on power, privilege, and positionality even as they learn to grapple with weighty issues in a thoughtful manner.

Facilitating reflection activities with a series of relevant questions and prompts is a good way to improve the process. Questions should encourage students to articulate and elaborate on their individual and collective experiences and to analyze the implications.

Conclusion

In the wake of increased political polarization, the unprecedented attack on Congress, and voter suppression efforts, serious concerns about the state of American democracy have come to the fore. The situation serves as a clarion call to higher education to produce graduates who are well prepared for public service—graduates who can draw upon their civic learning and democratic engagement at institutions where civic engagement and attention to social justice are educational priorities.

The program at Barry University exemplifies an educational initiative that signals acceptance of the essential role that institutions can and should play in preparing students for lives of civic responsibility in a democracy. Indeed, the Barry Service Corps Fellows Program has contributed to building students' commitment to active citizenship and social change as a way of addressing community needs and social inequities.

Numbered among today's students are tomorrow's leaders. It is incumbent on institutions of higher education to prepare students to become social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of civic responsibility—and who will engage meaningfully in systemic social change and democratic renewal efforts. ■

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Moving from Dialogue to Deliberation about Campus Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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Students from non-dominant communities have long faced discrimination and harassment on higher education campuses, which can undermine these students' sense of belonging, alienate them from university governance, and harm their wellbeing and ability to learn (Barnett, 2020; Wade et al., 2019). In response, universities have strived to address these campus social justice issues by promoting learning about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the co-curriculum and curriculum (United States Department of Education, 2016). Contemporary DEI education takes an intersectional approach by examining how multiple axes of privilege and oppression – such as race, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, ability, religion, nationality and citizenship – can affect social justice on campus (Clason & McKnight, 2018).

Increasingly, undergraduates' DEI education begins with student orientation programs that involve experiential learning about how power, privilege, and oppression can affect the campus community (French et al., 2021; Lechuga et al., 2009). This programming often mixes training in intercultural competency delivered online with intergroup dialogue, in which students of diverse backgrounds engage in small group, face-to-face discussion to build mutual understanding of how socialization has shaped their own and others' identities, and build positive communication and collaboration skills to bridge their differences. For many students, orientation is a foundational introduction not only to DEI, but also to experiential learning, in college.

Students appear to reap significant benefits from experiencing intergroup dialogue about DEI. Research across multiple universities finds that these dialogues help students to develop greater under-

standing of inequalities based on race, gender, and income; attitudes of cognitive openness, positivity, and efficacy in intergroup situations; empathy and motivation to bridge differences across groups; and participation in intergroup action during college (see, e.g., French et al., 2021; Gurin et al., 2011). Affective learning and effective communication (aimed at appreciating difference, self-reflection, and alliance building) especially enhance these effects (Gurin-Sands et al., 2012). Intergroup dialogue also contributes to students' civic education by developing their commitment to engage in social and political action after college (Gurin et al., 2011).

While these findings are encouraging, experiential education to advance DEI on campuses faces ongoing challenges, two of which this article addresses. One challenge is *how to engage some students more fully in DEI learning*. Many educators have found that some students especially resist learning about DEI experientially by participating in dialogue about difference, privilege, and oppression in diverse groups (French et al., 2021). For example, students from dominant groups can fear that they will be attacked or shamed in these discussions, while students from non-dominant groups may anticipate having to deal with their more privileged peers' insensitivities and micro-aggressions, or bearing the burden of defending their group and educating members of other groups about oppression.

A second challenge is *how to connect DEI learning in the curriculum and co-curriculum*. There are few detailed descriptions and evaluations of intergroup dialogue pedagogy in either the curriculum or co-curriculum (for examples, see Gordon et al., 2017; Ouedraogo, 2021; Pugh, 2014). Research says little about how to build on students' introduction to campus DEI in orientation and deepen this learning throughout

“Unlike dialogue, in which participants focus on achieving mutual understanding across differences, deliberation asks participants to come to a collective decision about how their community should take action.”

students' college careers (Barnett, 2020). A few institutions have invited students to participate actively in designing DEI programs to improve campus climate (United States Department of Education, 2016). However, many institutions do not integrate efforts for DEI led by student affairs staff with relevant academic instruction led by the faculty (Lepeau et al., 2018). This may be a missed opportunity to help students connect their understanding of the interpersonal experience of oppression (learned in co-curricular intergroup dialogue) with analyzing how to create institutional and systemic change to advance DEI (in the formal curriculum) (French et al., 2021).

One promising response is for faculty and staff to collaborate on developing opportunities for students to move from intergroup dialogue to deliberation with diverse peers about how to address the challenges to DEI learning. Unlike dialogue, in which participants focus on achieving mutual understanding across differences, deliberation asks participants to come to a collective decision about how their community should take action. These decisions may be arrived at by consensus or voting, and can take the form of recommendations to decision makers, prioritizing a set of options, or adopting new rules, regulations, and practices (Karpowitz & Raphael, 2014).

This article reports on a whole-class project in which undergraduates worked with their professor and student life staff to engage other students in campus forums about how to strengthen learning about DEI in student orientation and beyond, and generated recommendations for action for campus administration. The author, who taught the course, draws implications for how experiential pedagogy involving deliberation can be used to enhance student investment in learning about DEI and student voice in designing this kind of learning.

Description of the Practice

Context and Goals

The course was taught at a private, Jesuit, liberal arts university during the winter of 2021, which presented a window of opportunity for making institutional progress on DEI, especially for racial justice. In the prior year, university leadership had elevated investment in a more racially diverse faculty and student body to a top strategic priority, launched a search for the institution's first Vice-President for DEI, and commissioned an external audit of campus policing focused especially on the experiences of students of color. These changes responded to wider demands for racial justice in policing nationally and on cam-

puses, the polarizing 2020 Presidential campaign and its aftermath (including the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol involving white nationalist and white supremacist groups), and frustration across many campuses at the slow pace of progress toward DEI.

However, the project was also constrained by students' ambiguous relationship to the campus community during the COVID-19 pandemic, when almost all students were living off campus. Students took the course remotely and in a hybrid format, mixing synchronous course meetings with asynchronous online discussions. All class meetings and student consultations were conducted live via video conferencing.

The project formed the centerpiece of an advanced undergraduate elective for Communication majors, which also attracted non-majors interested in fulfilling a general education requirement in civic education. The course introduced students to the theory and practice of dialogue and deliberation in groups, organizations, and institutions. Student Life staff at the campus Office of Multicultural Learning (OML), which designs and delivers the DEI components of student orientation, served as the class's client. OML staff posed initial questions they wanted students' feedback on, gave input on the project design, and responded to the class's final report and recommendations. The class of 25 students collaborated to design the format and agenda, reach out to student clubs and professors to recruit participants, facilitate ten small-group discussions, compile and analyze student responses and recommendations, evaluate the quality of the deliberation, and draft and present the final report.

The project's learning goals for students in the course included:

- Applying theory and research on dialogue and deliberation to design a public forum
- Applying facilitation skills to small-group discussions
- Analyzing and synthesizing qualitative and quantitative data (student participant responses)
- Creating a final report and presentation for a client
- Collaborating with faculty, staff, and students to inform institutional policy and practice.

The course design allowed students to draw on their prior experience of intergroup dialogue about DEI during their own student orientation to complete an authentic task of consulting other students on behalf of campus staff. The main experiential education components were project-based learning (in designing, facilitating, and evaluating the forums) and action learning (in producing and presenting recommendations to OML).

The project also addressed the institutional goal of strengthening DEI education on campus. As the client, OML defined the main questions for student deliberations, including:

- What would increase student engagement in DEI in orientation?
- What should students learn and what are the best ways to introduce these topics?
- Which topics should be addressed in the online components and which should be addressed in face-to-face discussions?

Instructional Practice

Figure 1 summarizes how the course implemented Kolb's (1984) cycle of experiential learning, representing student activities in boxes and the educator's role between boxes (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). In Kolb's model, students learn by encountering concrete experiences, observing them reflectively, acquiring or developing abstract ideas to explain or respond to these experiences, and actively experimenting with these ideas. Educators support learners throughout the cycle by facilitating reflection, introducing expert knowledge to help learners make sense of experience, setting standards for how learners apply these new concepts, and coaching learners to evaluate their experimentation with ideas. In this theory, students make the greatest learning gains when educators choose experiences that are relevant to students' own lives and social reality, involve tasks that are authentic to professional or civic work, and engage students in multiple cycles of learning that help students to practice learning from experience (Kolb, 1984).

The project included two major kinds of *concrete experiences*. First, students reactivated their prior experience of DEI in new student orientation by com-

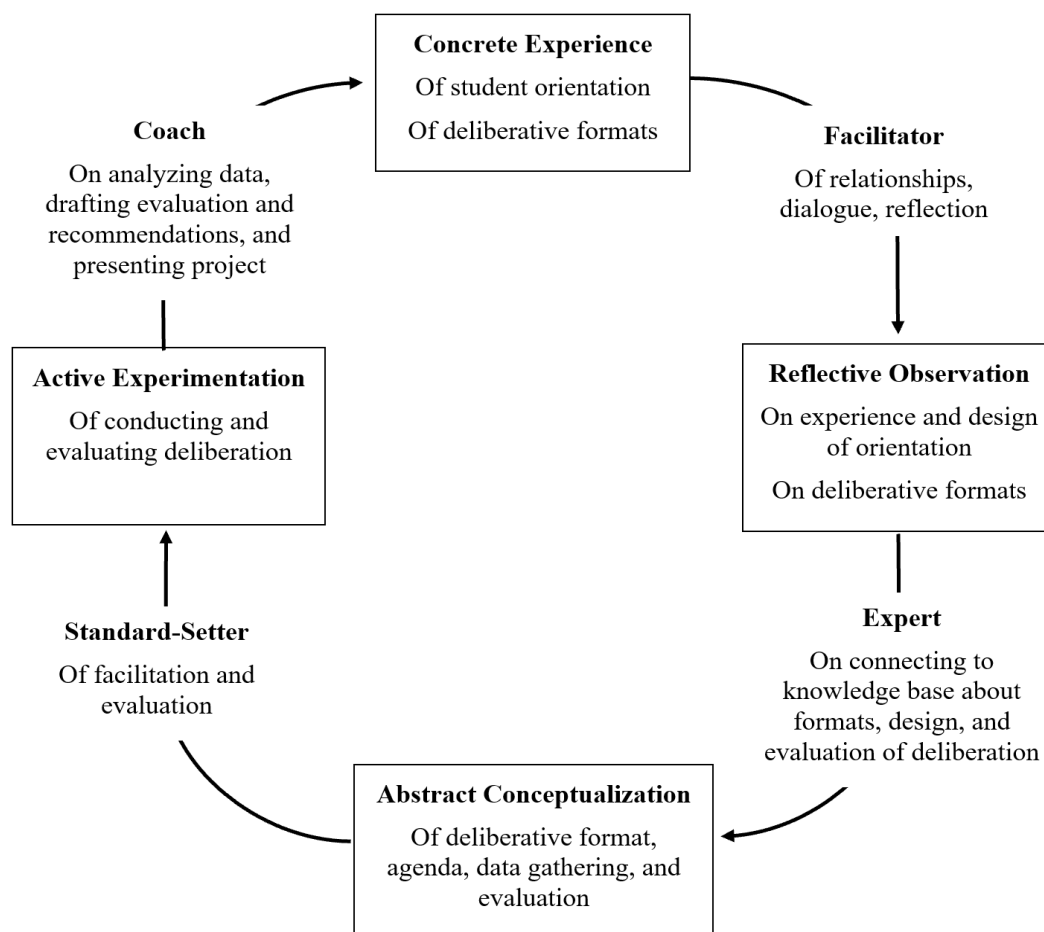


Figure 1: Implementation of Kolb's Cycle of Experiential Learning

pleting the same online modules about definitions of key concepts (e.g., diversity, equity, inclusion, microaggressions) and engaging in intergroup dialogue about these issues. Second, students participated in a variety of formats for dialogue and deliberation during class meetings. Each class engaged students in discussing readings by breaking out into small groups and employing a different format for dialogue about their prior experiences, or for deliberation to discuss, prioritize, and select options for designing the project. The instructor chose formats to use in classes that aligned best with the goals of the forums students would design later in the course, so they could draw on their experience of participating in each format before choosing one for their class project.

To help students move toward *reflective observation*, the instructor facilitated students' working relationships with one another by creating the agendas for students' small group discussions about orientation and deliberative formats, and ensuring that all students rotated through the roles of discussion leader and note-taker, as these skills would be necessary for conducting the forums. In this phase, students need to feel safe from negative judgements to engage in reflection on social justice issues (Pugh, 2014). Therefore, the class adopted a set of communication agreements patterned on those used in the orientation dialogues, which outlined how students would speak, listen, and care for themselves and others, and the instructor reminded students of the agreements before potentially challenging discussions. The instructor also established students' relationship with OML staff by facilitating a brainstorming session in which students developed questions about the project for staff, inviting staff to meet with students and respond to questions during class time, and moderating this initial meeting to clarify project goals and agree on deliverables that would be useful to OML. Students also read the extensive facilitation guide OML used to lead the orientation dialogues, which gave students a peek behind the curtain at how intergroup dialogues are organized and the learning theory that informs them. Students reflected on the guide in individual postings to an online discussion board and in live-class, small-group discussions about which elements of the dialogues students personally found most or least educative about DEI, and which elements of intergroup dialogue would be most helpful for the class to employ in its forum design. These discussions elicited both individual and collective critical thinking, which are valuable for reflective observation about social justice, especially because they allow students to compare their experiences and thinking with the perspectives of a diverse group of peers (Pugh, 2014).

Next, designing the forums required *abstract conceptualization* about how to choose a deliberative format, and design an agenda and data gathering methods that would meet the project goals. At this stage, the instructor introduced prior research and theory by assigning readings about forum design and about several relevant formats for the project. Students contributed ideas about the pros and cons of adopting or adapting each format in online discussion postings and used each format in their live class discussions about elements of the project design. After deliberation and consultation with the client, students chose an Appreciative Inquiry format (Ludema et al., n.d.), which focused participants on naming the organization's existing strengths (in how DEI was introduced in orientation), envisioning a desired future (a fully diverse, inclusive, and equitable university), and identifying and prioritizing the necessary changes to realize that future (by revising orientation and other DEI practices). In response to research demonstrating the value of deliberation in affinity groups for empowering members of non-dominant groups to contribute to public deliberation (Abdullah et al., 2016), the class chose to offer participants the option of engaging in discussion with peers of a similar gender, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, economic class, or physical ability. The course employed a similar process of reading prior research and deliberating over how to apply it to design the agenda and plans to capture participants' views in notes and a survey.

To prepare students for *active experimentation* with their ideas by holding the forums, the instructor trained students to facilitate and evaluate deliberation. At this stage, the instructor's role is to set performance standards and help learners to meet them by applying their newfound knowledge and skills effectively. The instructor assigned background readings on the art of facilitation and designed exercises for students to practice these techniques in class in a fishbowl (one group observed by other students) and in small groups. Students contributed, jigsaw-style, to a facilitators' guide filled with steps for dealing with difficult dynamics that often arise in discussions of DEI issues. The instructor also introduced readings and examples of evaluation criteria for high-quality deliberation, and supported students to draft a post-event survey for participants to assess the forums.

In the *active experimentation* stage, teams of two or three class members co-facilitated and took notes on a total of ten small-group forums, each an hour long and held via video conference. After the forums, the instructor coached students on how to apply their knowledge to achieve the project goals,

providing direction on how to analyze themes in the notes on participants' responses and quantitative responses to the post-forum evaluation survey. The instructor provided templates for the final report and presentation slides, and coordinated student teams to analyze, write, and present different sections of the report based on students' preferences. Jigsawing the report in this way provided another opportunity for students to engage in collaborative critical thinking and comparison of diverse perspectives.

Outcomes

Student self-evaluations gathered through university and departmental course evaluations, and the instructor's assessment of student learning, indicated that almost all students met the project's learning goals (which are stated above in the section on context and goals). In the students' self-evaluations, mean scores for how well they met each learning goal were all six or above on a scale of one ("no progress") to seven ("significant progress"). Students in the course also found the experiential learning methods valuable. Large majorities rated as "very effective" or "somewhat effective" the assigned readings (80 percent), live classes (90 percent), class activities and discussions (95 percent), online postings (85 percent) and the class project as a whole (85 percent) ($N=20$). When asked to discuss "why any learning methods were especially effective or ineffective," most students mentioned the project as especially useful. Students reported that "working together as a class helped me solidify understanding and ask questions"; "class sessions allowed me to put course concepts into action through live practices"; "the class project was most effective because we could put what we had learned into action while collaborating with each other"; "creating the dialogue and deliberation process required a lot of engagement with class materials, so I definitely feel like I learned a lot through the class project"; "the class project was definitely the most effective to me being able to see our learning and skills play out in a real life scenario"; and "it was nice to be able to participate in something that was rewarding as well as helping the school as a whole."

There was more evidence of student learning in the post-event online evaluation surveys completed by participants in the discussion forums. Participants rated the students' agenda and facilitation skills highly. Large majorities of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they "were able to explore diverse points of view" (88.5 percent), "learned enough to arrive at a well-informed opinion" (87.5 percent), "the facilitators led the discussion in an

impartial manner" (90 percent), "everyone's ideas got a respectful hearing, even if we didn't end up agreeing" (97.5 percent), that OML "will pay attention to the opinions expressed in our discussion today" (75 percent), and that "I feel more committed to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive [university] than I did before this forum" (83.5 percent) ($N=40$).

There were two main obstacles to student learning in the course. One was a handful of students' tendency to act as free riders on the work of the full class or of a team that facilitated a forum or wrote part of the report. The instructor held students accountable by assigning participation points to each individual online discussion posting as an incentive to read and contribute design ideas consistently; by requiring students to co-facilitate; and by requiring students to write drafts of the report in Google Docs that showed each team member's contributions to each version of the document. Another barrier was that some students feared facilitating a group discussion about potentially volatile DEI issues among a group of their peers. The instructor addressed these anxieties by developing an extensive facilitator guide with the class; offering multiple opportunities to practice facilitating in class throughout the course; giving constructive, individualized feedback on what student facilitators were doing well and could improve; employing co-facilitation, so no student had to moderate an entire forum; and developing a detailed agenda for the forums with the full class.

Implications and Action Plan

The literature suggests that higher education institutions can best promote progress toward DEI by taking actions consistent with their mission statements, practicing transparent and participatory governance, and continuously adapting programming and practices to relevant changes on campus and in the world (Barnett, 2020). This case suggests ways in which universities can promote student-led deliberation to accomplish each of these tasks, which are important for advancing DEI and preparing students to participate in democratic institutions (Carr & Thésée, 2017; Gurin-Sands et al., 2012).

The project suggested that student deliberation can generate valuable recommendations about how universities can *enact their missions*. As noted above, in the post-event evaluation survey participants said they felt that OML would take their recommendations seriously, enhancing institutional authenticity, and felt more personally committed to realizing DEI on campus. During the class's presentation of their

findings to OML staff and in post-event debriefings among the staff and the instructor, staff members said they appreciated receiving new insights, especially that students felt the best way to engage resistant peers was through the intergroup dialogue component of orientation, especially if trained students (rather than staff or faculty members) facilitated these discussions in smaller groups. Staff also felt they benefitted from recommendations that reinforced their goal of promoting a campus in which people of different cultures intermix often, while learning about and respecting each other's differences. Staff also took note of feedback that addressed structural barriers to DEI, such as the need for a more diverse campus community.

The project outcomes also suggest ways in which student-led deliberation on DEI could *improve institutional governance* by enhancing the transparency and accountability of DEI programs. The project provided a new opportunity for students to learn about *why* the institution introduced them to DEI issues using intergroup dialogue, and a new channel for student feedback on how to strengthen DEI in orientation and beyond. The deliberative skills and experiences that students in the course and their peers in the forums developed could serve them well in further discussions within student organizations, and with administration, about how to advance DEI on campus. Students found that holding some of these deliberations in affinity groups could add perspectives and recommendations that may not be raised in intergroup dialogues. For example, a Latinx-only forum paid special attention to transforming campus policing, while several female-only forums generated more recommendations about how to address gender bias on campus. In addition, because the course trained a group of students to facilitate discussion, and evaluation data confirmed that participants rated student facilitators highly, OML immediately recruited them to lead intergroup dialogues during orientation, and the Dean of Students approached the instructor for advice on how to consult students about pending reforms to the Campus Safety Department.

Finally, student recommendations, and the example of the project itself, helped OML to *adapt DEI programs and practices*. In particular, student feedback prompted OML to reframe the problem of engaging students in grappling with DEI issues on a deeper level after orientation. At the outset, OML saw this challenge as one of "getting reluctant students into the room" for additional dialogues led by staff. In contrast, students recommended training students and faculty members to bring these dialogues into student clubs and required courses across the curriculum, using

small-group methods in a variety of organizational and physical locations where students regularly associate and learn. This approach could help meet the challenge of bringing high-impact experiential learning to scale across the institution and integrating disparate efforts for DEI that have emerged in administrative practices, the academic curriculum, the co-curriculum, and assessment of student learning, so that they can become more than the sum of their siloed parts.

Conclusion

Institutions of higher learning must devote greater attention to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion to create a stronger sense of belonging among students from non-dominant groups and to overcome polarization between groups in the wider culture. Experiential learning in the curriculum and co-curriculum is making valuable contributions to these goals. Campuses can build on successful intergroup dialogues, like those held during new student orientation, by engaging students in deliberation about how to improve DEI on campus. In formal coursework and co-curricular organizations and programs, well-designed deliberation can develop students' voices and ability to facilitate change, allowing student learning to inform institutional learning. Opportunities for deliberation can improve institutions' ability to enact their educational missions, strengthen governance by deepening accountability and transparency of DEI efforts, and generate new ideas for updating and integrating DEI programs and practices across campus. ■

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Developing Community Partnerships to Promote Social Justice-Related Learning Outcomes

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Introduction

Each year, students enrolled in Communication 435: Integrated Marketing Communication (COMM 435) at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside (UWP) participate in a community-based partnership with *Focus on Community*, a small non-profit organization headquartered in Racine, Wisconsin, that strives to “unite our community in an effort to prevent substance abuse and inspire healthy life choices” (Focus, 2021, para 1). This upper division course provides students with the opportunity to apply concepts of integrated marketing, a primary objective of which is to create multi-media materials with a unified strategy to maximize return on investment for companies and organizations. In collaboration with *Focus*, students work to develop materials that contribute to a marketing objective, defined anew each year. *Focus* has a long history in our community, having celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2019, and the reach of their programming within the region is significant. The expressed mission, vision, and values that *Focus* upholds through their programming, and the general make-up of the community *Focus* serves, makes the community-based learning (CBL) experience in COMM 435 a productive case study through which to explore the relationship between experiential learning and social justice-related learning outcomes.

Community-based service learning is a high-impact practice (HIP) that fosters a reciprocal relationship between students and the organizations they serve (Anderson et. al., 2019, Blewitt et. al., 2018, Fougère et. al., 2020, Kilgo et al., 2015). Though many definitions exist to characterize HIPs, I proceed in this case study with the understanding that a pedagogical practice is high impact if it is effective and “correlated with positive educational results for students from widely varying backgrounds” (Kuh et. al., 2008, p. 1). The skills learned through HIPs

tend to be transportable and affect a range of student outcomes, such as higher order thinking and relationship building skills (Coker et. al., 2017; Blewitt et. al., 2018). For this reason, HIPs like community-based learning are both highly instructional and highly relational. The breadth and depth of the CBL experience enables dialogic communication among all parties (i.e., the community partner and the students, the students and myself, myself and the community partner). When established early, and modeled frequently, dialogic communication within the relational dynamics of a CBL partnership can bring pedagogical and social justice orientations into alignment.

This case study examines my experience teaching students in COMM 435 as a CBL course and advances two primary arguments pertaining to the development of social justice-oriented learning outcomes in community-based partnerships: 1) part-

“Service learning is a practice in balance, wherein the needs of the students are leveraged against the needs of the community partner.”

nering with organizations that pursue social justice generates educational resources that foster justice-related learning outcomes in the classroom, and 2) effectively teaching social justice in a CBL experience is best modeled through an ethos of social justice in which all parties sustain a dialogic relationship and co-create the parameters of the CBL project. To support these arguments, I discuss how dialogic communication is modeled and assessed in COMM 435 through an Active Listening learning objective and the structure of critical reflection with respect to the students’ CBL project. In the following sections, I elaborate on best practices for pursuing social justice-related learning outcomes in community-based partnerships by first developing my line of inquiry and description of practice. I then conclude with implications and next steps for educators looking to develop community partnerships that promote social justice-related learning outcomes in their own service-learning courses. This case study illustrates how dialogic communication encourages

students to be assertive, yet respectful and open, as they collaborate with the community partner.

Line of Inquiry

Community-based learning depends on the alignment between the pedagogical objectives of the curriculum and the objectives associated with service learning, which may include social justice-oriented learning outcomes. Through community service, students “become active learners, bringing skills and information from community work and integrating them with the theory and curriculum of the classroom to produce new knowledge” (Mitchell, 2008, p. 50). Developed by Rhoads’ (1997), the concept of *critical* service learning has evolved to describe “academic service-learning experiences with a social justice orientation” (Mitchell, 2008, p. 51; see also Rice and Pollack, 2000 and Rosenberger, 2000). As tools for encouraging “students to see themselves as agents of social change,” critical service-learning experiences position service as a means of addressing injustice in communities (Mitchell, 2008, p. 51). With this perspective, community-based learning can pursue service to social justice outcomes along with service to individual organizations.

Numerous studies have indicated that participation in service learning and CBL opportunities are linked with myriad diversity-related outcomes (Jones & Abes, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Simons & Cleary, 2006; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Engberg & Fox, 2011; Brownell & Swaner, 2010). In addition, there is a connection between reflective learning opportunities, the development of critical thinking skills, and moral reasoning growth (Nelson Laird et. al., 2011). The insights produced by these prior works have helped to decipher which *specific* pedagogical practices positively affected student growth within the context of precollege or other institutional factors. Nevertheless, questions remain about how these practices function within co-curricular experiences, primarily HIPs like service learning (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Braxton et. al., 1998; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Seirfert et. al., 2010; Kilgo et. al., 2015). Critical service learning, in part, addresses these questions and strengthens the connection between community-based partnerships and student growth.

Service learning is a practice in balance, wherein the needs of the students are leveraged against the needs of the community partner. Ideally, that partnership operates as a training ground for the development of students’ skills and yields positive results even in instances when the tangible deliverables produced by

the students are sub-par. Recommendations from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) support this argument. Aimed at developing work, life, and citizenship skills, the AAC&U advises that postsecondary institutions pursue four learning outcomes geared toward student success, including the goal that students gain “knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, intellectual and practical skills, personal and social responsibility, and integrative learning” (National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America’s Promise, 2007, p. 3). As part of their journey to gain knowledge of human cultures and to cultivate personal responsibility, students must actively listen and attend to new information and perspectives. A skillset that alters the mental “gatekeeper” for new information, active listening plays a prominent role in the degree to which students who are exposed to the complexities and unpredictability of their surrounding communities through the completion of a CBL project may demonstrate proficiency with the AAC&U’s advice for engaging successful service learning.

My approach to service learning in COMM 435 expressly prioritizes the alignment between curricular and social justice-oriented learning outcomes by assessing the degree to which students enact active listening with their CBL partner, which is measured and modeled through dialogic communication. In the next section, I elaborate on my description of practice, which outlines the Active Listening learning objective included in my syllabus and my expectations for dialogic communication between all parties. Both classroom practices take advantage of the educational resources made available through partnership with an organization that itself pursues social justice.

Description of Practice

In the two years that I’ve been supervising students in COMM 435, they have produced multi-media marketing materials for *Focus*, including a brief video spot to be aired in local movie theaters, strategic plans for social media use, and long form copy for distribution in newsletters and on the organization’s website, all with the purpose of increasing revenue and/or marketshare for *Focus*. The CBL project in COMM 435 is both intensive and extensive, spanning the entire semester and providing the foundation for every formal assessment in the course. Students are asked to engage in critical analytical thought, creative production of materials, oral presentation of and advocacy for their work (i.e., a “pitch”), and self-reflective exercises, all the while serving *Focus*’ expressed need to increase public interest in their programming. To develop a social

justice orientation in our community partnership, I have enacted two primary pedagogical practices: 1) an Active Listening learning objective in the syllabus, and 2) a purposeful structure of critical reflection.

Active Listening Learning Objective

Students in COMM 435 pursue an Active Listening learning objective: “To effectively gather client needs, internalize those needs, and create an advertising message for the client.” As a precursor to my students fulfilling this objective, I engage with it myself. Before my first semester teaching CBL began, I met multiple times with two representatives from *Focus* to develop a shared approach to the course that links my own pedagogical objectives with *Focus*’s mission to serve at-risk communities in Racine. In that first meeting, I asked several questions (mostly open-ended) soliciting information about the kind of work *Focus* does, what kind of project they would want the students to do for them, how they felt they could help the students, and how much face time with the students and/or small work groups they’d be interested in sustaining. Through this discussion, I learned that they were most interested in 1) increasing their fundraising within the community, 2) emphasizing that the organization was aimed at substance abuse prevention rather than treatment, and 3) highlighting specific programs. That meeting helped me to understand the phase of transition the organization found themselves in, as they had purchased a new facility and were scheduled to be moving locations just after commemorating their 40th anniversary. I have repeated this process ahead of each semester, tailoring my syllabus, course schedule, and lesson plans accordingly. The positive results of that proactive communication paid dividends, as pursuing the active learning objective myself enabled me to use my community partner as an educational resource and develop a class that would provide students the opportunity to participate in a social justice-oriented mission.

Once the semester began, I laid out the expectations for how the students would satisfy the Active Listening learning objective in their direct communication with representatives from *Focus*, as well as with volunteers and program enrollees. For example, in my first semester teaching COMM 435, one of the components of the students’ CBL project was to create a promotional video for *Focus* to use as part of its 40th anniversary fundraising efforts. This video included “talking head” interviews with program coordinators and footage of enrollees as they participated in the programs. The challenge of making the video was not just in capturing, editing, and finalizing the footage,

but also in developing a strategic plan for what the video would highlight, coordinating schedules with interviewees, handling requests to reschedule, and ensuring that release forms had been completed by any individuals who were videotaped, particularly minors. To navigate those challenges effectively, students met with representatives from *Focus* ahead of time to ascertain how the organization envisioned the video, who they felt would be appropriate representatives to interview, which program(s) they wanted to showcase, and when it would be most convenient to request time with the volunteers. These interactions between the students and community partner, wherein students were assessed for their active listening, facilitated the expectation that the students interact with our client in a dialogic way as opposed to a top-down hierarchical communication strategy wherein students dictated the terms of the project or vice versa.

To assess the students’ success in meeting the Active Listening objective in this case, I supervised meetings between the students and *Focus* representatives and held informal class discussions at the start of each class meeting about progress and challenges. In doing so, I was not only able to evaluate their proficiency with the Active Listening learning objective itself, but also redirect students or help them identify how their actions may have exacerbated or mitigated any challenges they faced in completing the video. For this reason, the Active Listening learning objective worked in tandem with the dialogic interactions between students and their client, client and instructor, instructor and students. As a result, we achieved meaningful, intersectional alignment between course learning objectives, learning outcomes, assessment opportunities, and a social justice orientation.

Structure of Critical Reflection

Another strategy for achieving alignment between my pedagogical objectives and social justice-oriented learning objectives was requiring tiered pre-, mid-, and post-project written reflections from students, each of which captured a different dimension of how students claimed personal responsibility and took ownership of their participation in the project. The pre-project reflection is graded as complete/incomplete and requires the students to respond to three prompts:

- After meeting with representatives from *Focus on Community*, list and justify three preliminary IMC (integrated marketing communication) priorities that you think would be worth pursuing as we move forward with developing our CBL project.

- What are two potential pitfalls that you predict may become an issue in this project?
- List three goals you have for yourself as an active contributor for this project and explain how each will enable you to be successful in your given role(s).

This initial pre-project reflection is also an opportunity early in the semester for me to mine key information about how each student relates to their group members, the mission at *Focus*, and the broader community. Upon receiving the reflections, I informally tabulate categories of comments, which either touch directly on or circumvent the issues of diversity and socio-economic justice inherent in serving a non-profit like *Focus*. In other words, if students fail to mention the ways in which their own biases or prior experiences may color their perceptions of the individuals served by *Focus*, I consider ways to actively broach that subject during an in-class debrief. If students do mention these or related concerns in their reflections, I use their comments as a starting point to have a more in-depth discussion.

The mid-project reflection functions as a checkpoint wherein students are asked to confront the strengths and weaknesses of their performance and that of their fellow group members. This reflection is also graded as complete/incomplete and initially tasks students with filling out a class-wide editorial calendar. On this calendar, each student articulates various tasks that must be completed, for what purpose (in the context of the larger CBL project) the task is suited, as well as deadlines for completion. Among other things, the editorial calendar is a tool of accountability that lets students identify and prioritize all key tasks associated with their section of the project, which engenders the expectation of personal responsibility. In addition to filling out the editorial calendar, students are asked to respond to two additional prompts:

- Name and discuss two ways that you have demonstrated commitment to the project and supported your group members in your collective effort to complete the project successfully and on time. Identify at least one way you can improve in this regard.
- Discuss the respective performance of your group members. Have they been supportive participants in the development of the project thus far? Has your group successfully managed the pitfalls you anticipated in the pre-project reflection?

Of the three project-based reflection opportunities, the mid-project reflection encourages the students to look inward in order to recognize their own agency in enhancing the project, as well as the relational dynamics within their work group.

The post-project reflection opportunity constitutes the self- and peer-evaluation and critical reflection sections of the students' Final Capstone Portfolio that they submit in lieu of a final exam. Students are invited to draw from their prior reflections when framing or illustrating either the evaluation or critical reflection portions of the portfolio. In critical reflection section, students are not only asked to provide a detailed, well-illustrated critique of their participation in the campaign, group dynamics, command of course concepts, and quality of performance, but also to consider the ways in which their work pursued *Focus*' mission and vision. Students are expected to write candidly and address points of strength and weakness in their performance. In fact, students who identify and illustrate ways they may not have adequately achieved these goals typically receive full marks in this section of the rubric. As this is the final opportunity I have to assess them, my feedback is oriented less on mechanics and more on the broader takeaways of the project and their experience working with *Focus*. Ultimately, the structure of critical reflection throughout the project leads students through speculative and reflective exercises as they co-create the project experience with their community partner.

Implications and Next Steps

This case study reveals insight for how best to link service learning with the promotion of social justice and improve student outcomes. In the preceding pages, I advanced two primary arguments for how to develop community partnerships that promote social justice-related learning outcomes: 1) partnering with organizations that pursue social justice generates educational resources that foster justice-related learning outcomes in the classroom, and 2) effectively teaching social justice in a CBL experience is best modeled through an ethos of social justice in which all parties sustain a dialogic relationship and co-create the parameters of the CBL project. Both arguments illustrate the imperative to involve all parties (student, instructor, and community partner) in the collaborative development of the service-learning experience through sustained dialogic communication. Moreover, formal assessment of students' active listening and purposeful reflection codifies the ways in which dialogic, co-creative critical service-learning experience improves student

growth in critical thinking and moral reasoning.

Importantly, this case study reveals the importance of modeling an ethos of social justice in the development and implementation of the course as a method of teaching social justice-related learning outcomes. Service learning necessarily leverages the needs of the students against the needs of their community partner. The role of the instructor as intermediary and guide may be widened to include that of leader, exemplifying the communication behaviors that define the nature of the community partnership. Completion of a service-learning project does not itself guarantee that students have internalized the goals of a social justice-oriented mission. Assessing the process of completion, however, may capture the specific communication strategies that characterize a critical service-learning experience, one in which students have internalized the goals of a social justice-oriented mission rather than merely producing materials that run parallel to a social justice-related mission.

Establishing an ethos of social justice through the development of community partnerships lies in both the pre-conceived structure of learning objectives and other classroom practices as well as how that structure is enacted. Through the process of completing the CBL project, students develop work, life, and citizenship skills, all of which prepare students for the complexities and unpredictability they will encounter in their respective community/communities. Therefore, adequate assessment of social justice-related learning outcomes will focus less on the content of the CBL project (i.e., writing mechanics or form) and more on the communication skills acquired and enacted through their relationship with the community partner.

A co-creative community-based service-learning experience motivates students to claim personal responsibility and agency. Through completion of the project, and the development of a dialogic community partnership, students recognize the successes and challenges that defined their experience and use that knowledge to positively impact others. It is challenging, but such challenges make critical service-learning experiences integral tools for student growth in high impact practices. Looking ahead, proactive and dialogic collaboration between instructor and community partner, community partner and students, students and instructor, may enable more fruitful outcomes for students as they learn to be more productive members of the communities to which they belong. ■

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Building an Ecosystem of Diversity Talent Development through Experiential Learning

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Access to professionals and insider knowledge of industry is most often enjoyed by students from privileged families (Davis & Warfield, 2011). Higher education institutions have a moral imperative to create access for underrepresented minority (URM) students; the business case and industry demand for diverse candidates support this imperative (Tsusaka et al., 2019). This paper describes an ecosystem of high-impact experiential programs created by one institution to ameliorate underrepresentation in industry.

Academic support programs for underserved students focus on retention and graduation (U.S. Department of Education, 2016) yet few focus on career readiness for post-graduation success. Underrepresented students are motivated to work hard yet they participate in the high-impact practices proven to enhance student development at lower rates (Kinzie, 2012). Their knowledge of industry expectations and networks is also limited (Russ, 2015).

Institutional Context

The site is Stony Brook University (SBU), a public research university in the northeast enrolling a diverse student body of 26,000 and noted for success in creating social mobility (Chetty et al., 2017). Founded in 1957, our strength in STEM research led to our inclusion in the Association of American Universities, an elite group of the nation's leading research universities. Stony Brook University is composed of colleges of arts and sciences, engineering, marine sciences, communications, business, and schools of medicine, nursing, social welfare, dentistry, and health technology management /allied health programs. The career service, known as the Career Center, is a centralized function, serving all students in all majors, degree programs, class years (first years through PhDs, and alumni), and career intentions. The Center manages career

exploration/preparation, student employment/work study, credit-bearing and non-credit experiential education programs, and employer outreach. In 2007 we responded to employer calls for more underrepresented candidates by creating the *Diversity Professional Leadership Network (DPLN)* to connect underrepresented undergraduates with industry mentors.

Initial success was measured by feedback from students and employer partners; small changes were made annually. *DPLN* was the beginning: in 2021 Stony Brook's Career Center coordinates several diversity talent preparation programs spanning multiple industries and diversity groups. Cohort-style programs include *DPLN* for URM juniors and seniors in business, engineering/IT and healthcare; *Future Ready Women in STEM* for first generation women in STEM; *JFEW SUNY Global Scholars* for junior and senior women aspiring to careers in diplomacy, international law and human rights; *Explorations in STEM Research* for first years and sophomores with little exposure to research, and recently, *Travelers Insurance Accessibility Support Career Prep* program and the *LGBTQ* Career Awareness* program. Additional programs, such as *SHEroes: Not All Superheroes Wear Capes*, *Diversity Internship Recruitment Fair*, and *Diversity Corporate & Alumni Networking Event*, are open to all.

Individual Programs

Given our unique portfolio of career development and experiential education offerings, we chose the National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) Principles of Ethical and Best Practices in Experiential Education (NSEE, n.d.) to guide the creation and continuous improvement of these programs, described below.

The **Diversity Professional Leadership Network (DPLN)** is a year-long cohort program providing industry mentors and professional development

for juniors and seniors from underserved backgrounds in business, engineering, IT, and health care. Partners in academic support programs are leveraged for outreach to the target population. Requirements include a 2.5 GPA and some leadership experience. Applicants participate in a group interview with Career Center staff and a final individual interview with the company. Students are paired with corporate mentors, called professional buddies. Training for buddies and students occurs in September, followed by bi-weekly meetings coordinated by the Career Center for professional development, buddy-student engagement, and community building. Students speak with buddies bi-weekly at minimum, sometimes more often, and do a shadow visit at the corporate site.

Students learn about diversity, equity, and inclusion in industry, hear from people of color, those with disabilities, and those who identify as LGBTQ* about their workplace experiences, resilience in overcoming obstacles, and success strategies. They create a career action plan, design a business card and LinkedIn profile, and develop their 90 second pitch. They acquire professional attire, attend job fairs and other networking events, and participate in workplace site visits at host companies throughout the year.

DPLN became a credit-bearing experiential course in 2019, so students have additional support of a faculty sponsor. Assessments are conducted annually; year after year students report increased knowledge of industry and business etiquette, improved soft skills, and most importantly, increased confidence. DPLN participants submitted eight times the applications and attended 30% more career preparation events than other students. DPLN has grown from 20 students and four companies in 2007 to 100 students and fourteen companies in 2021.

The **JFEW-SUNY Global Leaders Program** aims to reduce the gender gap in global careers by empowering women with the knowledge, skills, and experiences needed for career entry. Each year ten women are recruited from three SUNY campuses for a two-year program. The program, which includes scholarships and a paid internship, is funded by the Jewish Foundation for Education of Women (JFEW) and also supported by the State University of New York (SUNY) Global Center and each SUNY campus. At Stony Brook, the program is managed by Career Center staff with faculty partners in Globalization Studies.

During the academic year, students attend webi-

nars focused on female global leaders and women's issues. The summer after junior year, they intern with a globally-focused non-governmental organization (NGO) and are matched with professional mentors. Internship sites include organizations as large as the US State Department, Council on Foreign Relations, and RFK Center for Human Rights, to smaller entities such as Asia Initiatives and The Institute for Economics & Peace. Interns attend briefings about world events, hear from female leaders about their work and life experiences, and visit NGOs. During senior year, seminars combine international relations with career development.

Since the first graduating class in 2013, Scholars have received Fulbright awards, earned prestigious diversity-focused foreign service fellowships, such as the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellowship and the USAID Donald M. Payne International Development Graduate Fellowship, and acceptance to law schools and graduate programs. Several have gone on to live and work in local and federal government agencies, and overseas. Graduates describe the program as life changing.

They can discuss complex and challenging global problems and issues that impact women. Most importantly, they develop confidence in their ability to interact with diverse professionals at all levels.

Explorations in STEM Research was created in 2013 with a SUNY grant to increase retention in STEM. The team included the vice provost for diversity and directors of two offices: Undergraduate Research and Career Center. A successful pilot led to institutional funding, and later, a signature corporate sponsor with faculty partners from biology, physics, electrical and computer engineering, and the Women in Science & Engineering Honors program.

The program prioritizes diverse students from low-income backgrounds with interest in STEM but little exposure to research. Academic partners help recruit participants. The goal is to increase retention by exciting students about STEM research, improving lab and professional skills, introducing them to mentors, and equipping them with the experience, skills, and confidence they need to pursue STEM careers.

Housing in the residence halls and a stipend are provided for ten weeks. Students work in a lab with a faculty mentor, postdocs, graduate student researchers, and undergraduate peers. Weekly professional development seminars offer topics on responsible conduct

"Year after year, evaluations consistently demonstrate that the program achieves its goals."

of research, reading scientific papers, and presenting a scientific poster. They attend panels on graduate school and industry pathways, and connect with the SBU Center for Inclusive Education, which advances diversity in academia. A social and community building component encourages peer connections and support. Pre-COVID, site visits were conducted by the program team with each student and faculty mentor in the lab to discuss the experience. End of program assessments have led to enhancements each year.

Year after year, evaluations consistently demonstrate that the program achieves its goals. Most continue with research during the school year, and report increased knowledge of STEM career options and confidence in their ability to communicate science. Note, however, that they also report that the funding, especially the housing, was a critical factor in their ability to participate. An exciting unexpected outcome of the program's success has been the interest among faculty in securing additional funding streams to support more students in the program.

The **Future Ready Women in STEM** program prepares first-generation women for STEM careers. This year-long program is coordinated by Career Center staff and modeled after *DPLN*. Fall programming focuses on professionalism and career readiness. Weekly seminars introduce students to the career readiness competencies employers want (NACE, 2021) and offer career preparation activities, such as resume building, LinkedIn, internship search, and interview preparation. Students are expected to take action to secure an applied learning experience and participate in the Fall STEM career fair to meet employers. During the spring, students discuss their experiential placements (e.g. shadowing a health care practitioner in our university medical center, interning with a startup tech company in one of our incubators, or doing research with a faculty member). During spring 2021, industry projects were secured for teams of students to work on virtually as part of an academic course. Students present their final projects to industry representatives and earn micro-credentials in select career readiness competencies.

Assessments show positive results: all students reported improved communication skills and career readiness; 94% increased knowledge of career resources and industry connections, and improved professionalism. One student remarked,

It was one of the most meaningful experiences that I have had throughout my time at Stony Brook. Everyone in the program was just like me: STEM major,

female, and first-generation. And that was a community that I had struggled to find . . . I feel a thousand percent more confident.

The individual programs just described are signature programs we expect to offer annually, contingent on continued funding from our corporate, foundation, and institutional sponsors. Our success has allowed us to produce new offerings for additional diversity groups. The next two programs are new and small, and we are excited about their potential.

The **Travelers Insurance Accessibility Support Career Prep Series** provides exclusive workshops for students receiving services from the Student Accessibility Support Center (SASC). Travelers delivered a series of three curated workshops on resume writing, interview preparation, and workplace etiquette on campus. A networking event was organized at the company site with employees from their disabilities employee resource group. The ten students who participated witnessed how corporations are creating access points and support for professionals with disabilities. The program was postponed during the COVID pandemic; it will resume in 2022.

The **LGBTQ Career Awareness Program** was created through a partnership between the Career Center and LGBTQ* Services. Undergraduate and graduate students attend semester-long programming centered around the lived experiences of LGBTQ* professionals in the workplace, evaluating organizational culture and fit through an identity lens, and connections with companies actively seeking to recruit candidates who identify. Students attend a site visit with one of our corporate partners and meet with LGBTQ* professionals. All (100%) participants in 2019 stated they would recommend the program. One remarked,

The LGBTQ Career Awareness Program helped me find the bridge between my PhD program and careers in industry and government . . . the new experiences [company site visits, career coaching] and training provided from this program have helped me to develop a sense of progress and connectedness that is hard to maintain in my PhD program, as isolation and stagnation had previously been my norm.

This program was also postponed during the COVID pandemic; plans are underway for 2022. The success of the initial program prompted Career Center staff to apply for a small grant that will bring a DEI trainer to campus to coach career staff and others from student affairs in best practices in working with this student population.

Finally, the **Senior Transition Bootcamp** was created in 2021 in direct response to the COVID economic collapse. This program directed extra support toward underrepresented graduating seniors from low income backgrounds with GPAs <3.0, as these candidates would likely be most vulnerable in the challenging job market. A series of intensive career prep sessions were held every Saturday in May, covering job search essentials and foundations of money management, with individual intensive career coaching from industry experts. Participants were expected to attend our new *Just-in-Time Job Fair* in June. A summative assessment is forthcoming, although initial reactions from students were incredible gratitude for the opportunity to get prepared quickly for job market entry and increased confidence in their ability to secure paid employment.

Scaling Access

While we have been extremely pleased with the success of these programs, we note that the cohort model is staff-intensive, funding-dependent, and limited in terms of the number of participants. Scalable access is critical for institution-wide successes in these career readiness programs that advance economic, social, and racial justice. Grants from industry partners and foundations can make a difference.

Diversity Recruitment & Networking Event is a three-hour event with industry partners open to all students. It begins with a panel of employers describing their organizational values and DEI initiatives, including recruitment strategies and affinity groups. Students network in small groups with company representatives. Conversations are directed by student questions with samples provided at each table. In 2019, this program was featured on national television, *Matter of Fact* with Soledad O'Brien, highlighting Stony Brook's successes in social and economic mobility of diverse students. In 2020-2021, we recorded short videos of employers discussing their approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and commitment to hiring talent from Stony Brook University. Diversity student organization partners, such as the Society for Hispanic Professional Engineers, helped create the videos and coordinate the event.

Not All SHEroes Wear Capes is hosted during Women's History Month. The title signals that women need not be superheroes (vis-à-vis wearing a cape or brandishing indestructible bracelets) to be successful, nor be perfect to be considered a role model. In fact, we expanded that title by creating an acronym: Strong, Humble, Empowered, Resilient,

Original, Professional. SHEroes were sourced from our extensive list of industry partners, mostly mid to high level executives. An inspiring keynote by a female corporate executive is followed by small group networking sessions where students can ask anything. Keynote speakers have shared stories of overcoming gender bias, and personal views on the intersectionality of race, sexual orientation, and gender.

Summer Celebration of Research Achievements, a collaborative event among all summer research programs, is spearheaded by the Explorations in STEM Research team. Students in all summer research programs on campus present their posters to faculty and industry partners. Pre-college students in our summer bridge academic programs for underrepresented minority and economically disadvantaged students, and high school students from local underserved communities in diversity-based summer outreach programs attend to explore new science career pathways.

Partnership with Bottom Line (BL), a non-profit organization operating in several US cities that supports college success of low income first generation college students, is enabling us to better support these vulnerable students. More than 100 BL students are on campus, each with a dedicated BL advisor who works closely with them throughout their entire college experience. The Career Center provides career readiness workshops for these students and hosts BL gatherings on campus to ensure that they are fully aware of the resources we have to support them. This partnership is a good example of ways to maximize support for vulnerable students.

Lessons Learned/Implications for Teaching and Learning

Consistent with the NSEE Principles of Ethical & Best Practice in Experiential Education (NSEE, n.d.), all of our programs are assessed and evaluated. We know that the programs achieve their goals and develop students' career readiness competencies. Evaluations show high satisfaction, increased knowledge of industry culture, acquisition of a professional network, heightened self-knowledge, improved skills and increased self-confidence. Participants have earned competency-based micro-credentials and secured internships, jobs, fellowships, and graduate school admission. The Career Center's reputation as an inclusive service is evident in the growing numbers of underrepresented students who engage (e.g. in 2020, nearly 85% of students in diversity-based academic support programs utilized our services). Our campus

reputation as an agent of change and strong contributor to students' social and economic mobility has also enabled us to grow partnerships with faculty and staff.

Moreover, the success of this ecosystem has led to new employer partners, new institutional funding for expansion of programs and added staff lines, and the inclusion of career development in faculty-led grant applications. More faculty are highlighting the career readiness components of their existing courses and programs, and are seeking support for ways to embed career readiness and experiential learning with industry involvement in their courses.

However, challenges still exist. How do we measure long term impact? How can we scale access and support for all students? In a post-COVID world, how do we find the right mix of virtual and in person connectivity that maximizes resources and best supports students? How do we continue to educate ourselves and our partners about the varied and complex challenges students face as they navigate their way through college?

Recent research affirms the importance of very targeted and specialized support for students from underserved communities (Bloom, Dyer, & Zhou, 2018; Linn et al., 2015) that reach beyond retention and graduation. Combining career readiness with professional identity affirmation and sense of belonging (Lewis & Yates, 2019), exposure to career options and workforce preparation (Carnevale et al., 2018; Carnevale et al., 2019) and access to industry mentors and networks (Hvide & Oyer, 2018) could signal the future of how institutions define student success.

Recommendations

If your institution is ready to think differently about the economic and social justice approach to student success, diverse student talent development, and career readiness through experiential education, we offer these recommendations.

First, expand your definition of educator. There are many dedicated people within your institutions whose job titles may not signal their potential as educators and mentors in this ecosystem of support you are seeking to create. Staff in a variety of student-facing and back office positions may jump at the chance to contribute. Share your vision for the ecosystem, invite their input and participation, then train, develop, and support their contributions to the cause.

Second, use your institution's analytics and engage stakeholders to focus on target populations. Traditional outreach may be less effective, especially if there is a limited history of engagement with students from underserved communities. Partnerships with faculty and student organizations can amplify your message and motivate student engagement.

Third, consider varied approaches given your campus context, academic programs, demographics, as well as existing alumni and industry relations. For example, one initiative might focus on hybrid or remote corporate internships and another could connect project based learning in local community organizations. Disruptions to the global economy and its continued transformation will require a workforce with advanced technical and communication skills (Parkers, 2020), so be sure to emphasize the acquisition and practice of these career competencies.

Fourth, recognize that social capital is built through direct exposure to professional environments (Cui et al., 2015; Green & Brock, 2005). Industry connections build students' social capital, skills, and confidence in their professional identity (Davis & Warfield, 2011; Russ, 2015); aim to engage industry partners from the start.

Fifth and finally, commit to a long-term strategy to build a career readiness framework at all levels. An ecosystem is not built in a year. Engage faculty in identifying and extracting the career readiness competencies already present in the existing curriculum. Make those transparent to students and show them the connections. Look for partners in career development, alumni relations, and human resources, and others. Start small: pilot, assess, revise, build, scale.

Conclusion

Far more than a single diversity preparation program for a small cohort, Stony Brook University's ecosystem of diversity talent development and career readiness through experiential learning has resulted in a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion with positive impact on student self-confidence in their future career success, and long-term social and economic mobility. The authors firmly believe that career development and experiential learning are inextricably linked to the career readiness and long term success of underrepresented students, and are committed to long-term transformation of our entire campus as an agent of change. ■

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Experiential Learning across Borders: Virtual Exchange and Global Social Justice

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Introduction

Following the development and widespread adoption of learning management systems (LMSs) such as Blackboard and Moodle in the early 2000s, Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) has emerged as another method to support international education (Dorn et al., 2018; Jie & Pearlman, 2018). COIL programs connect students at campuses in two or more different countries to investigate global realities from a cross-cultural perspective through asynchronous (e.g., digital forums) and/or synchronous (e.g., Zoom meetings) digital engagement. As many scholars have noted, COIL collaborations between institutions in differing cultural contexts have several benefits, including: a) students use outside knowledge to create and assess posts in online discussion forums (Beckmann & Weber, 2016); b) students are provided an international perspective on the course content (Rubin, 2017); and c) they are often afforded the opportunity improve second language skills (Kasper & Weiss, 2005). In a time when acquiring global competencies is vital for individual development, a virtual exchange is a meaningful international learning experience for students, especially for those students who might not get to travel internationally. That is to say, COIL encourages the development of key career readiness skills, including global awareness, intercultural competence, digital literacies, teamwork, and problem-solving (De Castro et al., 2019; National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2019). Indeed, regardless of their major, students must be competent in these skills, especially in the areas of cultural understanding and global responsible citizenship.

Line of Inquiry/Gap in the Research

While there have been numerous studies descri-

“... virtual exchange proves to be an ideal medium for experiential learning where students can deepen their perspective on global social justice issues”

bing COIL collaborations between courses at different levels (for example, between graduate and undergraduate level courses [Kayumova & Sadykova, 2016]) or between courses in the same academic field at the same level (for example, uniting two international business courses [Benbunan-Fich & Arbaugh, 2006; Marcillo-Gómez & Desilus, 2016]), the research literature describing COIL collaborations between a developmental ESL class with a credit-bearing first-year English composition course is very limited. In particular, nonnative speaking immigrant students have not received enough attention in the research literature. Accordingly, in this study, we describe an online COIL collaboration between an ESL class at the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) of the City University of New York and a first-year writing course at the University of the Bahamas (UB). We have found that even though the language proficiency levels might be different between the two classes, COIL collaborative activities foster the development of writing skills, oral presentation skills, as well as critical thinking.

Furthermore, virtual exchange proves to be an ideal medium for experiential learning where students can deepen their perspective on global social justice issues, including issues of economic, environmental, and racial justice. We have established an explicit social justice agenda in one of our COIL assignments, the oral project, because we want our students to understand the ongoing legacies of racism, sexual violence, homophobia, and many other issues that violate the rights of individuals. Indeed, we want students to have a positive and empowering college experience in which they can value their identity, culture, and the characteristics of the community they have been brought up in while learning to value different ways of being.

Institutional Profiles

The Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) of the City University of New York (CUNY) is a diverse urban community college serving a largely immigrant student body with students from approximately 165 foreign countries (BMCC Quick Facts, 2018). (For example, the students in the BMCC class in this study hailed from all of the following nations: Bangladesh, Thailand, China, India, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Nigeria, Morocco, and Egypt.) The institutional culture at BMCC supports student engagement and experiential learning in several ways. Since spring 2019, the BMCC Office of Internships and Experiential Learning has partnered with E-Learning and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning to prepare faculty to implement COIL into their courses. Although faculty in several different departments at BMCC currently participate in COIL exchanges, the institution hopes to further expand opportunities for innovative COIL collaboration, with the goal of helping its students become more competitive as they enter an increasingly globalized and culturally diverse workplace.

Conversely, the University of the Bahamas is the national institute of higher learning in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. While the institution does hope to welcome significant numbers of international students in the near future, at present the University of the Bahamas serves almost entirely Bahamian nationals. Most students of the University of the Bahamas speak a mix of English and Bahamian Creole English, the home language of most Bahamians. However, a not insignificant number of UB students are members of the Haitian minority in the Bahamas. Like BMCC, UB is an institution serving a student body of largely socioeconomically disadvantaged, first-generation college students. Also of note is the fact that UB has only recently (in 2016) transitioned from being the College of the Bahamas; it is still, in many ways, a developing institution. Further, online education and COIL exchanges are both relatively new developments at UB, only beginning at UB in 2018 and 2019 respectively, with the former increasing dramatically at the institution in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COIL Projects

As we have suggested, our COIL collaboration was somewhat unique because it paired two classes with students at different levels of competency in English.¹ The BMCC students participating in the COIL project were enrolled in ESL 95. ESL 95 is a developmental course emphasizing writing

and reading skills while integrating a multi-modal approach to learning; however, oral skills are developed as well. In their writing tasks in the class, ESL 95 students focus on introducing, developing, supporting, and organizing their ideas in exposition as well as in descriptive writing. Conversely, the UB students were enrolled in English 119, a first-year academic writing course, focusing on critical reading, thesis development, and use of in-text citations.

Our COIL collaboration consisted of two major projects. In the first assignment sequence, what we called the education essay, students worked toward the production of an academic essay using Richard Rodriguez's noted autobiographical essay "The Achievement of Desire," an excerpt from his book *The Hunger for Memory*, as a springboard reading.² The purpose of the first task was to help students build a cross-cultural understanding of the expectations of college life, and the challenges of postsecondary education. In the second project, what we termed the global social justice video assignment, students chose an image or advertisement reflecting a social justice issue from their home culture and produced a YouTube video oral presentation in which they critically discuss the cultural context of the image, analyzing it according to the Aristotelian rhetorical appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos. We collected data for the current study in a variety of ways, including: pre- and post-project surveys of students; analysis of students' posts to group forums and assignments; and informal feedback from students at the end of Zoom sessions. The current study was authorized by BMCC's IRB, and all students provided consent to participate in the study.

Education Essay COIL Project

To begin the education essay assignment sequence, we asked students in both classes to read Rodriguez's "The Achievement of Desire" (1978), hosting a number of joint class Zoom meetings to discuss the content of the reading. In the work, Rodriguez describes his English literacy development as the child of first-generation Spanish-speaking immigrants to the United States. In the piece, Rodriguez paints himself as a student who strives very hard to achieve and be successful in an English medium learning environment; he is ambitious to be an outstanding good student, so he constantly reads and imitates his instructors to be successful. However, as he advances in his education, he finds himself more aloof from his working-class immigrant family. Further, in Rodriguez's piece, there is the theme of "scholarship boy"—that is, an over-achieving immigrant student who attempts to mimic and please the teacher rather than think critically.

A major reason we selected Rodriguez's piece as our springboard text is because students at both BMCC and UB share Rodriguez's experience of coming from non-traditional academic backgrounds; almost all of the students in both classes are first-generation college students. Further, many BMCC students share with Rodriguez the fact that their home languages and cultures differ from the language of instruction in, and the academic culture of, the United States. Although the Bahamian students live in their home culture (where they are receiving a postsecondary education), they share with Rodriguez, and their BMCC counterparts, the fact that they are largely first-generation college students—that is, they are outsiders to the academic environment. Further, as previously mentioned, the home language of most Bahamians is Bahamian Creole English while the language of schooling in the Bahamas is Standard English.

After our initial joint Zoom sessions, we paired students off—one from BMCC and one from UB—and directed them to interview each other (twice).³ The first interview was a getting-to-know-you task consisting of a series of questions on students' personal and educational backgrounds. The second interview, however, focused directly on Rodriguez's essay; it asked students to delve deeper into the text, as well as the educational backgrounds and the cultural contexts of literacy, language learning, and education in their and their partner's respective home nations or family heritage cultures (recall that many BMCC students are immigrants to the United States). The interview questions and students' postings were hosted on a joint private implementation of the CUNY Academic Commons In A Box (CBOX-OpenLab) platform ("Commons in a Box") accessible to students from both institutions. Finally, at the end of the first assignment sequence, we asked students to write an expository/academic essay on attitudes to education in their and their partners' home nations using evidence from the Rodriguez essay. After composing their draft essays, students received feedback from both their COIL partners and their professor to guide their revisions for their final drafts.

We believe that the COIL education project offered our students a unique opportunity for experiential learning for a number of reasons. First of all, we believe that the interviews between the classes and environment fostered a sense of belonging in the COIL class; in other words, in the COIL education essay, as partners hear about common challenges and read of Rodriguez's experiences, they learn that language accommodation challenges are a normal experience for first-year college students, and they understand that they need to be connected in the social

and academic milieu even if they face challenges. As a number of scholars have noted, it is important that students develop a sense of belonging in the larger campus community in order to avoid dropping out near the beginning of their college experience (Wolf et al., 2017). Immigrant students or newly arrived freshmen coming from diverse backgrounds often face challenges in adapting to the college environment, and some might want to keep their social connections to their native culture enclaves and prefer to socialize with students from their home culture.

As students asked in-depth questions in the second interview to find out specific challenges of getting a college education in the U.S. and the Bahamas, students took part in more active scholarly roles than they had previously been used to. By asking questions, students play out different roles, roles that they are not accustomed to playing in academic environments. For example, students could present themselves as *experts in their own experience* (Helm, 2018, p. 162). That is, they do not only take the role of *knowledge providers*, but they are also information providers and designers for each other. As Kasper and Weiss (2005) state, "learning to assume these roles helps students increase their feelings of efficacy, fosters their active processing and interdisciplinary themes and concepts, encourages them to reconstruct and accommodate existing ideas and make personal connections with learning, and builds metacognitive knowledge associate with enhancing task performance" (p. 283). That is to say, as students engage in conversation with their COIL partners, they take responsibility for providing the correct information about their surroundings and culture.

Furthermore, students learned a variety of valuable language skills through the education essay project. First of all, through the COIL education project, students learned to *negotiate meaning* (see, for example, Pica, 1994); that is, students worked together to understand each other even if their English proficiency levels are different. This negotiation of meaning may help ESL students to acquire vocabulary and native speakers might be role models to produce better L2 output. As stated before, COIL provides an opportunity for nonnative English speakers to interact with a native speaker and native speakers to learn different styles of English as a foreign language. Other language skills are writing, composing, and providing evidence. Especially for ESL students, this might be their first experience of writing a short paper that includes evidence-based primary research. Planting the seeds of important academic literacy skills in writing classes is important for academic growth and establishing confidence in students.

Social Justice Visual-Oral Presentations

As previously mentioned, in the *global social justice video presentation*, students selected a social justice topic from their home nation (or family heritage culture) and developed a YouTube video presentation in which they selected an advertisement or image relating to the topic, analyzing its cultural context, and discussing the image's use of the Aristotelian rhetorical appeals of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. Students then responded to each others' videos through posts to the joint CBOX forum. BMCC students presented on a diverse variety of topics, including: gender discrimination and sexual abuse in China; sexual violence in Bangladesh; underage marriages in Morocco; child labor in Ivory Coast; female genital mutilation in Guinea-Bissau; Boko Haram violence in Nigeria; government corruption in Haiti; and Islamophobia in the US. UB students also presented on an interesting, though less geographically diverse, range of topics, including: gender inequality in the Bahamas; environmental protection in the Bahamas; and LGBT rights in the Bahamas.

We established a social justice agenda in our oral project because we wanted our students to understand the ongoing legacies of racism, sexual violence, homophobia, and many other issues that violate the rights of individuals. Both English native speaker Bahamian students and second language learners in New York needed to understand the connection between sensitive topics of economic, racial, and social justice issues. Indeed, through learning about social justice issues in different regions of the world, students build their global awareness and understand how different social issues manifest themselves differently in different regions. For example, child labor in the Ivory Coast has a parallel social justice issue in child marriages in Morocco.

As we have contended, a major benefit of COIL collaboration is that it fosters global awareness in students, helping them build new perspectives. As students across cultures watched and listened to each other's global social justice issues, they learned from each other and became aware of issues that they have never heard of. For example, one student posted to the joint forum the following response after watching a social justice presentation on female genital mutilation in West Africa: "I found this presentation *extremely informative*. This was informative for me because I did not know about this issue happening in Africa . . . I am a female myself and this is something I would not approve of to take place on my body, this is pathetic" (emphasis added).

When students make comments on each other's social justice presentations, they also engage in dialogue. For example, the student who wrote a comment about genital mutilation in West Africa is provided with an answer to their concern by the student who developed the presentation. As this was a new awareness for the student from the Bahamas, the presenter wanted to clarify the topic by providing the following response:

Hi XXXX, I understand how you feel about this issue as a female but don't worry; now many organizations fight against this nonsense. Parents who force their kids to undergo female genital mutilation can go to jail.

What is significant in this interaction is that COIL projects prompt students to be part of a community of practice, an online community, and enable them to expand their global awareness about social, educational, and environmental issues.

As we can see from the exchange above, the COIL forum provides opportunities to have a dialogue between the presenter, "knowledge provider", and "the knowledge receiver". That is, students take alternating roles and gain confidence in expressing their points of view on global social issues. Selecting sensitive social and environmental topics fosters international perspectives of the same issue in different countries. These presentations provided a unique opportunity for all students on two campuses to share their local issues with everyone and internationalize the curriculum (Olson & Peacock, 2012). Moreover, students have the opportunity to act as experts in their own culture. For example, one BMCC student commented in a reflection post how the social justice video assignment gave them the opportunity to explain their home culture to their COIL partner through the social justice issue, contending that:

Watching the justice issue in my country is so useful. Because it helps me to let someone know about my country. It also helps to know about how they live in their own country. That can further my understanding all around the world. It is useful to practice my speaking skills.

As we see in the above quote, in addition to the assignment allowing the student to adopt the empowering position of an expert on their own culture, the student also commented on how the global social justice assignment allowed them to practice speaking in English.

Conclusion: Implications for Teaching and Learning

In this paper, we have provided an overview of

a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project between two writing courses at different proficiency levels at institutions in two different nations. While one class consisted largely of immigrant ESL speakers, who are not native speakers of the language of instruction, studying at an urban institution and the other class consisted largely of students who have lived their whole lives in one island nation, both classes consisted largely of socioeconomically-disadvantaged first-generation college students. Despite the physical, linguistic, and cultural divides between the students, we believe that COIL collaboration offered students a transformative experience. Indeed, Winner and Shields (2002) have described how web-based digital exchanges between Anglophone Caribbean postsecondary students and American postsecondary students can expand students' perspectives; that is, they have the potential to "break the island chains." We fully agree.

A major factor we want to emphasize in this study is the important role that peer feedback and interaction play in the learning process in COIL exchanges. Despite the fact that the BMCC ESL students were "remedial" English learners, the Bahamian students acknowledged the richness and strength their counterparts brought to the virtual exchange program. Indeed, we found that students on different campuses coming from different sociolinguistic backgrounds both embraced the asset mindset and value the multicultural aspect of international learning. That is, collaboration makes learning and teaching engaging and encourages critical consciousness for students and teachers in an open society. Through COIL collaboration, students learn to perceive each other as valuable and equal to each other.

Furthermore, the COIL projects in our courses provided an opportunity for students to make a connection between experiential learning and social justice issues. Accordingly, we believe that the pedagogical implications of our study, including those of building students' global citizenship, expand beyond just ESL and first-year writing classrooms to include potentially all academic writing and communication courses. While the overview of the two COIL projects and study results presented in this study provide limited generalizations, we believe that they will inform faculty members to develop collaborative, cross-cultural projects in their courses and enhance student outcomes. Therefore, COILing does not only provide an international perspective, resiliency to grow and learn, but it also satisfies the needs of employers and the community who need individuals with an open mindset. ■

Notes

1. While Bahamian students can be classified as native speakers of English, they are actually native speakers of Bahamian Creole English. Accordingly, standard English is the target language of schooling in the Bahamas.
2. The essay topic is a modified version of an essay assignment originally generated by Prof. L. Anderst of Queensborough Community College, CUNY (Personal Communication, April 15, 2018).
3. Although we did provide guiding questions, we encouraged students to come up with their questions as they conducted the interviews.

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Fundamentals of Anthropology as Effective Experiential Learning Strategy to Promote Social Justice

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Introduction

This practice-based experiential learning approach utilizes the discipline of anthropology to foster a more nuanced understanding of social and racial inequalities with the objective of promoting advocacy work among student learners in an undergraduate introduction to cultural anthropology course. The core of this experiential learning practice exists at the interface of interrogating self and others at the community level. This is accomplished primarily by coupling foundational anthropological concepts and ethnographic fieldwork techniques on a local and global scale. Through immersive interaction with a cultural, racial, or linguistic “other” and subsequent reflection on “self,” students are encouraged to connect lived experiences and observed realities to power structures and social constructs that generate inequality and difference within societies. The purpose of this strategy is for students to move beyond the familiar and confront experiences of difference with a critical lens to arrive at an informed and empowered position to carry out important social and racial advocacy work. At the center of these experiences are discussions and reflection assignments on issues of positionality, privilege, power, and representation. Outlined below is a discipline-centric pedagogical approach and details of two experiential learning experiences: a semester-long visual community interviewing project and an immersive cultural field experience to Costa Rica.

Background

The work takes place at Widener University in the city of Chester, Pennsylvania roughly 20 miles south of Philadelphia along the I-95 corridor. The city’s famous slogan, “What Chester Makes, Makes Chester” harkens back to a booming industrial era known for the wartime production of steel ships at Sun Shipbuilding as well as consumer goods such as paper products by Scott Paper Company. Despite previous

economic and social prosperity, the city of Chester experienced rapid deindustrialization during the second half of the 20th century, which fueled white flight to affluent Philadelphia suburbs. This left behind a predominantly African American population and an economically depressed urban center struggling with poverty, pollution, corruption, and violence. The city’s business sector is now comprised of a large casino, a state prison, a major league soccer franchise, the Crozer-Chester Medical Center, and Widener University; institutions that operate disjointedly and often in disharmony with the local city government.

Although the university is working toward change, Widener is considered a predominantly white institution due to the lack of racial and ethnic diversity among faculty and the student body. The divide is further pronounced vis-à-vis the local demographics of the city of Chester, which is roughly 70% African American. Further, the campus is physically separated from the community on one side by Interstate 95. In other areas, roads and walkways leading from campus to the city have been barricaded off with concrete dividers or closed off with wrought iron gates. Institutional-level tensions with the city regarding possession of the Alfred O. Deshong public art collection and lawsuits over parking ordinances complicate the long-term sustainability and feasibility of community-university partnerships. While certain departments, initiatives, and individuals are doing fantastic work to bridge the Chester–Widener divide, overall, there is very little integration of students in the day-to-day ebb and flow of city life in Chester.

Problem Statement / Line of Inquiry

The disconnect between Widener and Chester is compounded by the fact that the average Widener student arrives to campus with very little exposure to diverse cultural or ethnic traditions. Many students

come from working-class backgrounds in the tristate area whose families cannot afford opportunities such as international travel or summers abroad. For example, in conversation with a group of students, I discovered that hopping on the train to frequent a dim sum restaurant and explore the rich cultural heritage of Philadelphia's Chinatown seemed out of reach, if not outright intimidating. That year I took the student group for a dim sum Thanksgiving and stroll through the China Gate on 10th Street in the city. However, it was exactly these types of hesitations, and even fear on behalf of the students, that led me to recognize some of the barriers that exist in undergraduates' lives when it comes to learning about and critically engaging with cultural difference.

This resistance was especially the case for first-year students who were simultaneously adapting to college life in a new setting with an increasing number of interactions on-screen or via social media. Not only are new students unaware of the local history and surroundings in Chester and the diverse cultural traditions in nearby Philadelphia, but they are also increasingly disengaged with human interaction "in real life," be it in classroom group work or in extracurricular activities. Recognizing the importance of exposure to cultural otherness and the need for critical skills to dialog through difference in pursuit of equality, I found the practices highlighted below to be effective in addressing these issues.

Experiential learning, as it relates to the social sciences, often involves going out into a community to conduct field studies or work with different groups who provide students new approaches and collaborative perspectives to learning. A large component of this type of experiential learning practice requires students to step outside of their comfort zone and communicate with distinct populations, oftentimes with the expectation of bridging cultural, linguistic, racial, generational, or geographical divides. To maximize learning within these encounters and support student involvement in advocacy opportunities for social and racial justice, I argue that educators must focus on developing a critical lens to frame student understandings of systemic inequalities and differences that students observe. This lens should be applied in experiences that require students to employ basic communication skills including talking and listening to people whose stories and daily lives are different from their own.

As we emerge from pandemic-induced social isolation into an increasingly siloed and divided political world, I argue that educators must dedicate a renewed amount of time and pedagogical space within our

learning environments to teach students how to confront and reckon with difference in myriad forms. Creating the space for generative dialogue and skill sets to promote social activism rooted in empathy for other human beings, as basic as it sounds, is a competency of utmost importance for today's college students.

The line of inquiry this work follows then is twofold. First, I will discuss how an anthropological approach to understanding difference can lead to empathy-building, a critical cultural lens, and self-awareness, all of which are crucial justice-related learning outcomes. Second, I will identify and describe two community-level experiential learning practices (one local and one global) that put these skills to use, namely the People of Chester Project and an optional nine-day cultural immersion trip to Costa Rica.

The primary question this work seeks to answer is: What particular strategies or practices in higher education foster justice-related learning outcomes? More pointedly, what types of experiences can experiential learning educators employ that empower students to step outside of their comfort zone, listen and relate to others' lived experiences, and ultimately understand the systems that created these realities as well as the options available to generate societal change and promote equality?

Description of the Practice: Anthropology as Approach and Method to Activism

Community engagement and cultural immersion as stand-alone "learning from life experience" (Kolb 2015, p. xviii) do not promote a holistic theoretical understanding of experiential learning. Truth, according to Kolb (2015), "is not manifest in experience" (p. xxi). Rather, emphasis should be placed on the conversion of an experience into "learning and reliable knowledge" (Kolb, 2015, p. xxi). Experiential learning as process, as opposed to technique or outcome, thus involves not only direct experience, but critical reflection, the extraction of learnings, and future application of that knowledge (Kolb, 2015).

The experiential learning described in this work employs an anthropological approach. Students critically engage with social and cultural difference and then reflect and utilize this knowledge in a semester-long, community interviewing fieldwork project followed by an optional immersive international field experience the following semester. While other experiential learning practitioners have explored intersections of international fieldwork, anthropology, and social justice (McClellan & Hyle, 2021; Smith, 2010; Bossaller et al., 2015), current works fail to

highlight the basics and broadly applicable fundamentals of the discipline that serve as low-hanging fruit in justice pedagogies. Thus, the focus of this anthropological approach to experiential learning lies in participant observation, which involves the semiotics of self and other, and the concept of ethnocentrism.

Why Anthropology?

With certitude, every anthropologist has been asked some rendition of the question: “What is anthropology?” To clarify, anthropology is the study of humans and the human experience.¹ A critical first step to empowering students to advocate for justice is cultural understanding and human empathy. I argue that it is impossible to be an ally² without being able to relate to someone else’s circumstance or picture yourself in their shoes. Socio-cultural or cultural anthropology involves the study of peoples’ everyday lives, cultural practices, behaviors, institutions, belief systems and practices in locales all over the globe. Situated at the core of this intellectual exercise is the practice of long-term ethnographic fieldwork in which researchers conduct participant observation, the primary research methodology of the discipline. This method requires the researcher to be present and involved in the daily routines of the community for long periods of time, while taking detailed field notes of their observations and experiences (Schensul & LaCompte, 2013).

Fieldwork is an endeavor where “self” and “other” encounter one another and through which new forms of knowledge are constituted. Early practitioners focused their gaze on primitive human subjects in far off colonies ostensibly too barbaric to be civilized by European settlers. Still struggling to reckon with this dark history, generations of anthropologists have since critically engaged with the poetics of self/other both in the field and afterward as we “write culture” or critique power relations in advocacy work. Today, a healthy debate ensues concerning subjectivity, objective truths, power structures, representation and how or if one even can, in fact, speak for, with or about others.

Ethnographic fieldwork trains students of anthropology to become participant-observers of others’ lived realities. Students learn to embrace cultural relativism and reject ethnocentrism; the belief that one’s own culture or way of life is normal, natural, and thus superior to other cultures. Anthropology opposes using one’s own culture to evaluate and judge the practices and ideals of others. Cultural differences are understood to be relative to the contexts, world-views, and systems of meaning from which they stem.

Developing a non-ethnocentric lens is similar to Hallett and Majka’s (2020) discussion of cultural humility, a cognitive skill that entails both recognizing “the limitations of one’s own point of view and being willing to listen to others’ perspectives” (p. 150). When paired with exposure to difference through participant observation and a critical assessment of a culture’s social constructs such as race, institutions, laws, practices, and beliefs students begin to develop the holistic foundation necessary to carry out informed social advocacy and justice work.

The People of Chester Project: Application through Local Field Experience

The People of Chester Project is a visual ethnographic interviewing initiative developed in response to a lack of student exposure to diverse groups of people and an institutional–community divide that hinders student engagement with the local community. It was implemented in multiple sections of an introductory-level anthropology undergraduate course at Widener University over a three-year period. A driving factor in the creation of the project was to demonstrate to students that even in times of polarizing extremes when topics of politics, race, migration, gender, or sexuality feel unapproachable, a basic but powerful strategy exists within reach of every student to bridge divides often perceived too wide to cross; namely to be human, to talk and listen. By moving into new social spaces and embracing unfamiliarity, fleeting discomfort or the awkwardness of silence, students learn to navigate the intricacies of self/other encounters which can ultimately facilitate social understanding, connectedness, or common ground, enhancing student confidence to confront difference. The discovery of possessing the ability to empathize or relate to a stranger with whom you never envisioned speaking is a powerful realization for students who are too often silenced by difference. As such, the main objective was to increase student interaction with a broader range of people and identities that stretch beyond their customary social circles utilizing a critical anthropological lens. As a secondary objective, students were to gain first-hand experience carrying out community-based fieldwork involving ethnographic data collection and analysis techniques.

At the beginning of the semester students were presented with an overview of the project tasks: to identify a place or person of interest within the city limits of Chester, conduct an audio-recorded off-campus interview with someone they normally wouldn’t interact with, and take a photograph of this person that showcases their relationship to Chester.

Leading with this assignment on the first day of class typically evokes varying levels of discomfort or anxiety expressed with heavy sighs and remarks such as, “You want us to go where?” or “I can’t do that.” Ultimately, all the students do participate, albeit some with more ease than others. However, what repeatedly surprises me year after year is the initial apprehension and how some students believe they simply cannot do this type of work. Students could choose to interview anyone they liked so long as they lived or worked in Chester (and had no affiliation with Widener). Some students sought out local professionals in their field of study, others scheduled times to meet with local government officials, while others interviewed individuals they encountered at the bus stop or at a corner business. The critical component was that students move outside their comfort zone and into new cultural spaces to observe people who speak, think, or act differently than they do.

To kick off the project, students wrote an in-class reflection on what they know or believe to know about the city of Chester and the people who live there. They were then asked to analyze the foundations of this knowledge questioning narratives their understandings may or may not perpetuate. They completed a community mapping assignment and readings about Chester to lend historical and demographic context to the project. The next class session was spent in the lobby of the university auditorium, a space on campus that hosts “Connections: A Timeline of Our History,” a life-size historical timeline exhibit depicting events in the city of Chester alongside university milestones. The historical photographs and documents served not only as a starting point for identifying a person to interview but also as a conversational common ground students could reference when conducting interviews with individuals from Chester.

Students of anthropology study cultural, ethnic, racial, or linguistic “others” but in turn also learn about self as this knowledge is applied through reflection. At the center of this experiential learning experience are discussions and reflection assignments on issues of positionality, privilege, power, and representation. During class students explored and assessed forms of representation in ethnographic works and examples of visual storytelling projects such as Brandon Stanton’s *Humans of New York* (2013) and A&E’s Look Closer campaign. Students grappled with questions such as, how much of what we see is influenced simply by our presence as an observer?

How much of what we think we know about “others” is informed by our own implicit biases that we bring to the field? How do we recognize and engage with these biases as we interact with others in social justice work? How do we follow the ethical principle of do no harm? These questions are intrinsically tied to the anthropological practice of ethnographic fieldwork and are imperative questions to discuss when directing students into the field whether at home or abroad.

Upon completing their interviews students returned to campus to transcribe their interview data, and qualitatively code for overarching themes in their work. With partners they identified several quotes or excerpts that they found to be impactful or elicit an emotional response. Near the end of the semester students presented their work displaying the photograph of their interviewee and reading their selected quotes to the class. Peer feedback was provided on each students’ work to assist in selecting a final excerpt to include in the collective work.

Next, students organized the profiles into a cohesive storyline on the walls of the classroom based on varying themes present in the interview data such as loss, triumph, gun violence, life dreams, or the mundane. They later shared selected interviewee profiles and stories on university social media in conjunction with students in the communications program to provide an ethnographic depiction of the interesting people and stories that make up the social fabric of Chester. Impressive examples included a female fire-fighter breaking gender barriers at the local ladder, a friendly neighborhood bartender, a Chinese immigrant restaurant worker, an alumnus of the Pennsylvania Military College, local school children on their bikes, artists, a factory worker, a single mother, and many others. As students collectively built the storyline they grappled with questions of representation, stereotypes and positionality.

A Global Field Experience In Costa Rica To Bring It All Home

A cultural immersion spring break trip created an additional experiential learning experience for undergraduate students in Costa Rica, a country where the author has conducted research for over 10 years. This was an ambitious 9-day trip executed in conjunction with the Office of Global and Civic Engagement of Widener University. Rooted in the same context and project objectives, a global fieldwork experience was developed to capstone learning

“Students of anthropology study cultural, ethnic, racial, or linguistic ‘others’ but in turn also learn about self as this knowledge is applied through reflection.”

from the introductory course. The international field experience was intended to underscore the interconnectedness of human lived realities and the value of applying this lens to different cultural contexts.

By the time the small group of students arrived in Costa Rica they had already crafted a critical lens to interpret differences they observed in course material and in the community of Chester. This experiential learning opportunity entailed exposure to a foreign culture, language, and peoples through direct contact with community members and local leaders/organizations. Purposeful planning challenged students' worldviews through exposure to "difficult differences" related to race, power, inequalities, and human rights. Students traveled to different regions of the country where the author facilitated their welcome into local community settings such as private homes, schools, farms, production facilities, and rural development organizations. Students sampled home-cooked Costa Rican food and learned how families live off the land. They explored sustainability, grappled with exploitative labor practices, and saw first-hand the environmental degradation of invasive pineapple farming through the eyes of local organic agricultural producers. They attended a rodeo, volunteered in a community kitchen, and shared games and active play with school children at recess. Their reflective video-recorded testimonials during and after the trip express integrative student cultural competency and knowledge through in-depth recognition of similarities/differences between different cultural practices and worldviews. The footage was compiled into a film highlighting students' experiences and debuted at Widener University as part of a student presentation.

Outcomes

My experiential learning approach was driven by the intent of exposing students to difference to facilitate the growth of a justice-oriented student toolkit. By pairing the experience of cultural, racial, and linguistic "others" with an anthropological lens that critically engages with systemic roots of inequalities, students connect social issues in their backyard to ones around the world, whether that be environmental degradation, racism, poverty, or access to clean water. The real-world examples that exist at home and abroad serve as connecting nodes in a more nuanced cultural competency, self-awareness, and critical cosmopolitanism (Birk, 2014). In this sense, the described experiential learning approach and practices featured in this work are examples of building a bridge to new cultural and social spheres located in neighborhood surroundings and in other parts of the world.

Without the impetus of the project, most students would not have ventured off campus to explore the city of Chester. Based on pre- and post-reflections of both experiential learning experiences, students expressed satisfaction in learning about new places and spaces. The most prominent theme in student reflections was a newfound connection to local communities and an appreciation for the commonality of lived human experiences and social phenomenon in diverse settings. One student wrote, "I was struck by the fact that even though we as students often come from other cities and states, we share a lot in common with Chester residents." Another student on the Costa Rican trip expressed: "Being on this trip really just drove home the experience of being immersed in a different culture, learning about the different people that live here and really learning that we aren't so different no matter where you live."

In some cases, the project interviews led to deeper ties to the community. For example, a priest at a nearby church came to campus to meet with an interfaith group, a NGO leader hired a student as an intern, and a local business owner of a donut shop was quite pleased to see Widener students show up for baked goods. The People of Chester Project also led to several undergraduate research opportunities in which student assistants digitized, indexed, and coded the data. The People of Chester research data was presented at a High Impact Practice Fair at the university during which community member photographs and interview quotes were shared in a public format.

Conclusions for Teaching and Learning

Conducting these experiential learning opportunities, in particular the People of Chester Project, at an introductory level with non-anthropology majors, was a productive learning endeavor but it was not without its challenges. The project requires a lot of pedagogical scaffolding so students don't get overwhelmed with the ethnographic component. Questions and anxieties abounded, especially when students were identifying and locating interviewees and crafting interview questions. Entire class sessions were devoted to interview strategies and developing interview topics.

Similarly, at the start of each class, several minutes were reserved to touch base, provide updates or identify any roadblocks that students were encountering. Obstacles would be presented and then opened to the floor for discussion of possible solutions. As this project is a microcosm of in-depth, and long-term ethnographic research, when students shared their inevitable challenges it served as a group learning opportunity to highlight the realities of doing ethnographic research.

For example, it was common to hear students assert that they couldn't contact their desired interviewee. Upon further examination, it was often revealed that they only tried outreach via email. Asking the class how this would be addressed in a long-term ethnographic project, classmates suggested going there to speak with the person at different times of the day. Working through these pain points together allowed me to realize that students were learning other important skills in this experiential learning project as well. For example, it teaches persistence and boundaries around research expectations, how to frame and present the intent of one's work, recruit a prospective research participant and how to relate to participants in their role as university students.

Developing this project to scale is another challenge. After several semesters of sending students out into the community, many would return to the same people and places asking for interviews. One example of this was the city police station where officers were understaffed and overly taxed with patrolling and administrative duties. On more than one occasion the chief of police invited students into his office for the interview component of the project. When this came to light, I paused the project and have since created a database and stricter guidelines for students to use when selecting a potential interviewee.

Action Plan / Next Steps

Conducting in-person ethnographic research came to a grinding halt during the Covid-19 pandemic. As we begin to return to normal, I will assess the feasibility of continuing the People of Chester project utilizing the new database to avoid overburdening the Chester community.

When in-person research is possible again, my next step is to seek community partners who may be interested in collaborating on special topics or partaking in co-authored ethnographic visual productions. I also plan to develop this project into a service-learning course with new components directed at giving more back to community participants and potential partners. A further goal is to ultimately identify a permanent platform or location on campus to exhibit the People of Chester images and stories. A visual display of this ethnographic project would underscore the boundary-crossing objective of this project by moving faces and stories beyond the Chester-Widener divide, reminding students that a start to bridging racial and social frontiers is to move beyond the familiar and confront experiences of difference with a critical lens. ■

Notes

1. Known as the four-field approach, the subfields of anthropology are: (1) Archaeology, (2) Biological/Physical anthropology, (3) Linguistic anthropology, and (4) socio-cultural anthropology (Guest, 2020).

2. The term "ally" here is used not only because I identify as an educated, white, cis-gendered woman and thus embodying the privileges of such a position, but also because following Crenshaw (1989), I understand all identities to be multidimensional and of varying-privileges intersecting along lines of race, nationality, economic status, language, physical ability, religion, sexuality, gender, etc.

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"Agents of Change": Lessons Learned from the Nation's First Undergraduate Civil Rights Advocacy Clinic

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America has shown a striking lack of progress almost 150 years after President Ulysses S. Grant signed the Civil Rights Acts of 1871 for the purpose of "securing to all citizens of the United States the peaceful enjoyment of the rights guaranteed to them by the Constitution and the laws" and to prevent the deprivation of "the emancipated class of the substantial benefits of freedom." Black Americans are routinely killed by police officers. Immigrant children are only recently being freed from cages at our Southern border – and healthcare, educational, and economic inequity and instability are rampant in minority communities nationwide. Our nation's colleges and universities are uniquely positioned to address these challenges in real-time—but how?

Specifically, how can universities support their students in pursuing civil rights activism? In doing so, how can universities involve students from marginalized communities who are most affected by justice issues? In this paper, we will explore lessons learned from the nation's first civil rights clinic at the undergraduate level.

Responding to the urgency of our time, the Dornsife College at the University of Southern California (USC) created the "Agents of Change: Civil Rights Advocacy Initiative" in the Summer of 2020 to support students in addressing civil rights challenges in the Los Angeles community. We will discuss the importance of the civil rights activism clinical model at the undergraduate level. We will also explore challenges and best practices in incorporating hands-on field work, community partnerships, mentorship, and custom-tailored curricular classes and modules.

In 2020, young people rose up *en-masse* in the street to respond to numerous tragic police murders

of Black Americans, including that of George Floyd. More than ever, students have a broadly inclusive definition of "community" and are looking for ways to accomplish fairness and justice in their communities. Universities must do more than pay lip-service to students' needs to positively impact the world they are inheriting. Universities must create and facilitate opportunities for the students to do the work they earnestly desire. Undergraduate civil rights clinics satisfy the need for students who are eager to take action on justice issues. In this role, universities can help bridge the gap between the community and the classroom—both by connecting students to opportunities in their communities to take action, as well as by bringing community leaders and lessons into classrooms. The goal of USC's new Agents of Change program is twofold—to allow students to do fieldwork toward solutions of pressing civil rights issues, while

"Universities must create and facilitate opportunities for the students to do the work they earnestly desire."

also enabling a real-time transactional bridge between classroom pedagogy and community experience. The program has developed meaningful community partnerships and corresponding curricula. This two-fold approach affords students opportunities for meaningful hands-on learning in activism, policy, and the law.

Importantly, the program has been structured to close the "access gap" that has historically prevented many minority and low income students from participating in prestigious civil rights opportunities. To address this issue, the University provides necessary work-study stipends and counts as selection criteria experiences of students whose understanding of social justice is shaped by their own demonstrated ability to overcome challenges. To make the most of the students' experiences, program staff collaborate with professors to link students' field

work to classes the students already intend to take.

In this paper, we will describe the undergraduate civil rights clinic model, structure, and programming of the Agents of Change program, as well as its underlying theoretical and pedagogical frameworks.

Problem Statement: Universities Must Curricularize, Facilitate, and Financially Enable Student Civil Rights Activism

The George Floyd uprisings of 2020 resulted in what has been described as a “seismic shift” in public opinion on issues of racial justice, policing, and support for the demonstrations following Floyd’s murder by police (Russonello, 2020). Following these demonstrations, universities around the country felt the heat of student activism on campuses. A study of 130 statements released by universities in the aftermath of the George Floyd uprising revealed that colleges made both short-term commitments such as one-time events, as well as long-term commitments like improving relationships with the community (Belay, 2020).

For example, at USC in June of 2020, students marched inside university gates and organized fora where students could share their experiences of being Black at USC (Solis, 2021). University President Carol Folt responded with an update on “Diversity Initiatives” announcing that the University celebrated Juneteenth for the first time and removed the name of a controversial figure from its international and public affairs building (Folt, 2020). It also announced the launch of revision and creation of focused programming, including: an office of Equity, Equal Opportunity and Title IX to act as a clearinghouse to report incidents of bias; a Community Advisory Board to oversee the campus’s public safety operations; a Task Force on Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI); a Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer; a “space” and new “programming for underserved students”; mandatory unconscious bias training for students, faculty, and staff; and new initiatives to increase “community collaboration” (Folt, 2020).

Student activism reached its highest level in 2020, since 2015-2016 (Cudé, 2020), and it follows that university programming should help to facilitate student activism, as well as to build bridges between the university and the surrounding community. Service-learning and internship opportunities can serve a vital role of connecting students with meaningful activism opportunities in the community that fulfill the students’ desire to participate in social change, as well as the university’s desire to further connect

with the surrounding community. Both service-learning and internships are considered “high impact practices” in the achievement of a well-rounded liberal arts education (Kuh, 2008). This is especially true for students who enter the university with lower academic scores, as well as for “students from communities that historically have been underserved in higher education” (Kuh, 2008, p. 1).

Tragically, while historically underserved students tend to benefit most from service-learning and internships, these students are less likely to have access to these opportunities (Kuh, 2008, p. 17). Therefore, making these types of experiences available to all students will “have a demonstrable impact in terms of student persistence and satisfaction as well as desired learning outcomes” (Kuh, p. 20). Universities must recognize this problem and “create incentives to induce purposeful behavior” (Kuh, p. 20).

It is important to note that “low-income and/or first-generation students may lack the financial and/or social capital to identify and then complete an internship” (Hora, 2021, p. 17). Resultantly, it may be the case that “internships act as a gatekeeping mechanism that inhibits social mobility” (Hora, 2021, p. 17). In one study, 64% of student respondents who had not participated in an internship during college said they “had hoped to do so but could not for various reasons” (Hora, 2021, p. 18). Among those reasons, the top four were students’ “need to work,” “heavy course load,” “lack of internship opportunities,” and “insufficient pay” (Hora, 2021, p. 18). Universities can help overcome these challenges by providing financial support for student internships, by providing some amount of course credit for internship, as well as by curating and assisting with securing meaningful internships in the areas of civil rights and social justice.

In structuring school-supported service-learning and internship programs, educational institutions must be wary of requiring or incentivizing a model of unpaid labor. There is growing criticism of universities for perceived complicity in exploitative unpaid internships—which disproportionately harm low-income students, may skirt labor regulations, and benefit private corporations (See Perlin, 2011). Therefore, rather than mandating unpaid internships for course credit—in which students essentially pay for course credit to work for free—universities should consider providing compensation to participating students.

It is vital for university-supported service-learning and internship programs to be linked to pedagogical models that help “participants to see their

[service] questions in the larger context of issues of social justice and social policy—rather than in the context of charity” (Stanton et al., 1999, p. 3). To do this, service-learning opportunities should be paired with opportunities for students to reflect on the systemic causes of social problems and critically analyze their experiences. (Stanton, p. 3). This should be done in the context of an “engaged pedagogy” (hooks, 1994, p. 203) in which students are “active participant[s]”, and not “passive consumer[s]” (p. 14).

Universities should also ensure that the “principles for service-learning” are incorporated into their relationships to community partners: ensuring that the impacted community members “control the services being provided,” that the people served are empowered through the service, and that there is an acknowledgment that the student interns are learners and can shape their educational experience (Stanton et al., p. 3). University service-learning programs should foster a sense of “reciprocity” between the student participants and their clients in order to avoid paternalistic notions of “charity” and center a justice-based framework that centers the needs of the community in which the university is housed (Stanton et al., p. 3).

Program Description: USC Dornsife’s *Agents of Change: Civil Rights Advocacy Initiative*

Created by Program Director Olu Orange at the request of Associate Dean Tamara Seabrook-Anderson in the Summer of 2020 at the USC Dornsife College, the *Agents of Change: Civil Rights Advocacy Initiative* (“*Agents of Change*”) has committed institutional resources to the cause of social justice for the culturally diverse and vibrant population of the City of Los Angeles. The program is a first-in-the-country undergraduate civil rights clinic within which students participate in a sequence of three civil rights advocacy divisions: (a) governmental policy; (b) community activism; and (c) legal advocacy over the course of a two-year commitment. The following is a description of the program’s structure.

Student Selection Process

The program’s competitive application process attracted at least three times the number of applications as spaces available in the program in its first year—demonstrating strong student demand for this type of programming. The application process was directed by program staff with the goals of mitigating bias through an objective rubric and identifying students with a demonstrated commitment to civil

rights, work-ethic, teamwork, resiliency, ability to thrive in the program, and diversity of backgrounds, skills, and experiences. The process also considered how students’ understanding of justice issues had been shaped by their own lived experiences. While the application process will likely be continuously refined, its goals will remain the same of providing a well-rounded, holistic understanding of student applicants and their ability to thrive in the program and contribute meaningfully to its goals.

Program Partnerships and Structure

Community partnerships have been vital to the program’s success. With the assistance of Program Manager Kath Rogers, *Agents of Change* has established and maintains relationships with nearly 40 community partners—ranging from grassroots associations such as Black Lives Matter to legal services groups like the Legal Aid Foundation to government entities like the California Governor’s Office. The program aims to pair students with partner organizations that are a good fit for each student, based on the student’s interests, skills, and background. Throughout the program, students rotate between three internships—focused on “community activism,” “government policy,” and “legal advocacy.” The latter legal placement is the program’s most time intensive internship, which is an acknowledgment that legal work may have a steeper learning curve, and the nature of legal remedies requires students to stay longer in order to see a legal case through its various stages. This emphasis on legal remedies may also reflect the fact that the program’s Director and Manager are both civil rights attorneys.

Crucially, students receive a generous stipend for the entire duration in the program. The stipend addresses the peculiar paradox of minority students being the least able to participate in USC programs designed to address issues that negatively impact minority communities. This stipend aims to allow students to pay their bills without worrying about juggling additional employment. As an example, one participating student previously worked at a grocery store during her college education. The stipend allowed her to quit that job and focus on a new role in the City of Los Angeles Department of Civil and Human Rights.

Classroom Learning Component

Classroom learning helps to bolster the students’ field work experiences by incorporating structured reflection, as well as theories of change. One important vehicle for classroom learning is the program’s coordinating class called “*Law and Local Political Activism*,” which provides students with a working

understanding of legal issues relevant to civil rights activism in Los Angeles, as well as theories and methods for creating social change. It features regular guest lectures by local activists and leaders, and the course syllabus includes modules relating to the three methods of social change emphasized by the program: activism, government policy, and the law.

In its exploration of activism topics, the course examines relationships between local change-makers and the systems and structures they seek to change. It also explores the demographic make-up and traditional interests and needs of persons living in the Los Angeles region, basic concepts of the American justice system, analysis of case law, discussion of race-based inequities and the access to the legal “access to justice gap,” the structure of the court system and its functionaries, and legal rights of protesters and the public. Course assignments involve development of practical skills, as well as critical reflection on the students’ field work experiences. Students are encouraged to bring their life experience and prior knowledge into the classroom and to create a supportive, nurturing environment.

In addition to the one-unit coordinating class, the program also collaborates with professors to embed curricular modules into classes in which participating students are enrolled. Program staff coordinate with professors to incorporate custom-tailored civil rights modules into existing course curricula. The goal of these curricular modules is to further link the students’ field work experience to their classroom learning. The modules relate to the subject of the students’ field work by featuring local guest lecturers, incorporating experiential exercises, and involving students in local community-based advocacy efforts. For example, one political science class included a guest speaker from Human Rights Watch who discussed ongoing efforts in California to eliminate pre-trial detention, engaged in dialogue with students, and discussed ways students could get involved in these types of legislative efforts.

Maintaining Perspective in Fundraising

Experiential programs in which students receive financial support have costs and require fundraising. One source of funding program administrators and development officers may be inclined to look toward is corporate support. In fact, in the wake of 2020’s intense nationwide furor over police killings, multiple corporations announced spectacular gifts to support civil rights causes and endeavors. Sample commitments include Bank of America’s \$1 billion dollars, Walmart’s \$100 million dollars, Nike’s \$40 million dollars, and Target’s \$10 million dollars (Reuters, 2020.)

At first glance, these commitments appear to demonstrate good corporate citizenship and potential partners for civil rights program support. But the precise *nature* of the program must also be considered. A clinical civil rights advocacy program must maintain credibility with dedicated community partners and idealistic student participants – groups of people committed to fairness and justice. Sponsors of students’ activities, whose names will sometimes be attached to students’ efforts, cannot be simultaneously engaged in creating the very problems the students and their community partners are working to solve.

Looking at the four corporate donors listed above, participation in a credible civil rights program by any of them presents problems. Internationally, Bank of America finances Malaysian palm oil plantations where trafficked persons are enslaved, beaten, and made to work for no wages (Mason, 2020). In the United States, Bank of America supports police associations in cities where many of the worst and most deadly civil rights violations by law enforcement officers occur: Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Atlanta (Armstrong, 2020). In late 2020, Walmart paid an eight-figure settlement to settle a federal civil rights lawsuit brought to address hiring discrimination against female applicants nationwide (U.S. EEOC, 2020), and funds police associations in Washington, D.C. and Houston (Armstrong, 2020). Nike’s supply chain includes goods produced by forced labor from Uyghur workers who were sent to work camps by the Chinese government where they cannot practice their religion and are surrounded by watchtowers and razor-wire (Xiuzhong, 2020). Last, Target has given “Public Safety Grants” to more than 4000 law enforcement agencies (Skolnik, 2021), and “the company has long been associated with police surveillance and [the Minneapolis Police Department]’s treatment of black and low-income residents of the city” (Mak, 2020). Officers from the Minneapolis Police Department killed George Floyd.

No civil rights program can command the amount of credibility in the community necessary to position itself to truly be of service on fairness and justice issues by affiliating with such corporations. Therefore, when seeking financial support, program administrators should avoid the temptation of the recent high-dollar corporate campaigns and remember that between 1988 and 2018 corporate donations declined by the largest percentage – yet alumni giving remained proportionally consistent across educational institutions (Shaker, 2020). Stated differently, the passion of the moment has prompted circumstance related corporate giving. Logically,

as popular sentiment decreases, so will corporate money. However, over time, the significant and lasting love alumni have for an institution will yield support as a constant. As of 2018, alumni giving was surpassed only by foundation gifts (Shaker, 2020).

Sample Student Outcomes

To demonstrate the impact of the program so far, we provide case studies of two student participants. Katrina is a Junior majoring in Political Science and is currently interning with Black Lives Matter of Los Angeles (BLM-LA). For the past six months, Katrina has served as a policy team intern with BLM-LA. In this role, she has learned how to lobby elected officials, write bill language, work with a disparate coalition of organizers and attorneys, as well as read and understand civil rights laws. Katherine is helping to pass two important state bills: Senate Bill 2 (the “Police Decertification Act”), and Assembly Bill 118 (a law to fund community-based responses to mental health crises, domestic violence, and other emergencies). At the outset of Katrina’s internship, she was reluctant to speak up in meetings because she was unsure what to say. After six months, Katrina’s confidence has noticeably improved after having the opportunity to facilitate group meetings, speak at rallies, and organize events. She is now an active participant in coalition meetings and has been vital in shaping two important pieces of civil rights legislation.

Elisa is a Junior majoring in Political Science and is currently interning with the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California working with the Jails Conditions team. In this role, she has worked to oppose the expansion of local jails and has addressed civil rights violations against incarcerated individuals. Elisa has helped incarcerated individuals file grievances, obtain medical and mental health treatment, and report civil rights violations to jail command staff. Notably, Elisa has taken the initiative to expose the Orange County jail system’s failure to provide hot meals, medically required diets, and to meet religious dietary requirements. Her work recently resulted in a state investigation and LA Times exposé of regulatory violations related to food served in these jails.

Next Steps and Implications for Experiential Learning

Admittedly, it is too early to speak decisively about the impact of *Agents of Change*, as it is a new program. However, in reflecting on its first two semesters, it is clear that participating students and the program’s partners are benefiting by their involvement. Two students have been quoted in major news sources

for their activist work, and nearly all participants have stated that the program is a favorite part of their college experience. The weekly classroom reflections have been surprisingly effective, as students have commented on how much they enjoy the opportunity to reflect on their experiences with their peers each week. The program’s partners have resoundingly indicated their appreciation for the students’ work in service of their mission.

The authors of this paper believe programs like *Agents of Change* can serve a crucial role in colleges around the country in bridging the gap between the community and the classroom. They establish important relationships of trust between the university and local community partners, and they help students to understand how social change happens from both a theoretical and practical perspective. Perhaps most importantly, they can help students effectively channel their passion for social justice into effective action that will position them for a lifelong career in public interest – at a time in history when this work has never been more important. ■

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Social Justice through Service-Learning in Parks & Recreation Management Education

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Introduction *The Need*

The creation and history of the United States (US) parks system are rooted in injustice. The oppression of indigenous peoples illustrates the early history of environmental (in)justice. The US government displaced Native peoples from the outdoor environment and the hunting and gathering practices that sustained them (Gruenwald, 2003), including for the acquisition of national park lands (Kantor, 2007). Every national park was once Native American land from which Native peoples were forcibly removed (Kantor, 2007). “Treaty rights to traditional use[s] such as hunting and fishing were erased, often without acknowledgment or compensation” (Kantor, 2007, p. 42).

US parks access was racially segregated until 1942 and visitation to all national monuments, battlefields, historic sites, memorials, recreation areas, parkways, lakeshores, seashores, rivers, and other park sites has been and remains overwhelmingly a practice of white people (Weber & Sultana, 2013). Researchers have posited affordability, cultural preference, discrimination, and location or accessibility as reasons for the continued low minority participation in national park recreation (Weber & Sultana, 2013).

Pitas et al. (2020) found Black respondents were approximately half as likely as white respondents to report a great deal of personal or household benefits from their local park and recreation services. Though Pitas et al. (2002) calls for further research to delve into why Black respondents perceive fewer benefits, Mowen et al. (2018) suggests that current local park and recreation offerings may not match non-white individual’s preferences. At both the national and local levels, “many communities of color are still deprived of quality parks and recreation opportunities, and the racial and ethnic disparities in provisions of public parks and recreation continue to be a serious social justice issue” (Lee et al., 2020, p. 102).

People with disabilities, especially those with ambulatory difficulty, have particularly limited access to recreation settings such as parks (Lee et al., 2020). In 2006, the National Park Service (NPS) acknowledged their failure to meet the minimum level of access for citizens with disabilities as required by federal law (Hansen et al., 2017). As of 2014, disparities remained. The NPS noted a lack of accessibility for visitors with disabilities in more than 400 national park units and recognized many recreational assets lacked inclusive opportunities that would broaden the spectrum of visitors able to enjoy these unique experiences (National Park Service [NPS], 2014). Most NPS units have not provided programs specifically for visitors with disabilities (Hansen et al., 2017).

Other marginalized groups also lack equitable access to parks and recreation amenities and programs. According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) (2018), which addresses parks and recreation across all levels, only 30 percent of park and recreation agencies deliver programs specifically to serve the LGBTQ+ population, despite a great need for quality park and recreation opportunities for these individuals. Recreation programs may make inclusion efforts, but they tend to be reactive in nature, addressing specific participant requests rather than serving the broader community (Anderson et al., 2020). LGBTQ+ participants are conscious of barriers to participation in recreational spaces, indicating that attempts at inclusive practices have often lacked communication between the serving organization’s staff and the LGBTQ community (Anderson et al., 2020).

Only 27 percent of agencies have programs targeted at refugee and immigrant communities (NRPA, 2018). Schultz et al. (2020) found that age, ethnicity, and race were the most frequently reported diversity and inclusion programs in the NPS at a rate of between 7 and 10 times more than religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status.

In addition to park visitors, parks and recreation employment also demonstrates inequities. White employees account for 79 percent of the NPS, and 62 percent of all employees are male. Black employees comprise almost 7 percent, Hispanic employees make up 5.6 percent of the Park Service general workforce, and Asian Americans encompass only about 2.3 percent of employees, all of whom are underrepresented as compared to percentages of these groups in the general population (Sonken, 2020). In cataloging the relevancy, diversity and inclusion programs of the NPS, Schultz et al. (2019) acknowledged the underrepresentation of diverse groups in the NPS workforce and noted the NPS Executive Order Director's Order 16B (NPS, 2012). This order articulated policies that prioritized achieving increased diversity and inclusion within its workforce (NPS, 2012).

Scholars have recommended that diversity and inclusion programs in parks and recreation need to continue cultivating an inclusive culture that will support successful recruitment of a diverse workforce and greater gender equality (Schultz et al., 2019). Across the profession, gaps remain in understanding how systemic racism, unfair power structures, and a lack of cultural competency and humility affect diversity, equity and inclusion, and access to quality park and recreation spaces and programs (NRPA, 2021).

At the national level, park and recreation services may have lost ground over time in addressing issues of social equity (Pitas et al., 2020). In a follow-up survey conducted in 2015 using the same items and methods as a 1992 study, Pitas et al. (2020) observed racial/ethnic discrepancies in terms of access to, use of, and perceived benefits from local park and recreation services that were not present in the original work. Local park and recreation services are also increasingly falling short of their goal to benefit all stakeholders equally (Pitas et al., 2020). To address the issue, the NRPA launched Parks for Inclusion in 2018 (NRPA, 2018). NRPA defines inclusion as “removing barriers, both physical and theoretical, so that all people have an equal opportunity to enjoy the benefits of parks and recreation” (NRPA, 2018, p. 2). NRPA (2018) plans to improve access and programming for underrepresented groups.

Park and recreation leaders face significant challenges in their efforts to promote diversity and establish inclusionary and equitable practices at their agencies. These challenges include difficulty developing staff capacity and competency around diversity, equity and inclusion and attracting people who reflect the community to recreation careers

(NRPA, 2021). To meet these goals, the industry requires recreation and parks professionals at all levels who are informed and intentional about inclusion and social justice. That journey starts with parks and recreation management education.

The Method

Service-learning. Service-learning is considered a form of experiential learning (Lin et al., 2017). Students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). Service-learning gives students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community (White, 2018).

Within the recreation literature, Stevens (2008) suggests that “service-learning is a hands-on class project in which you learn by helping others, discover how class knowledge is useful in the real world, master practical skills . . . and gain an appreciation for diversity” (p. *xii*). Service-learning opportunities can create a sense of urgency and provide a huge sense of accomplishment (Zimmerman et al., 2014). These experiences allow students to learn “hands-on” skills like problem-solving, conflict management, and time management, to which they may not be exposed in a traditional classroom setting. Zimmerman et al. (2014) found service-learning played a key role in the development and learning of the students in a recreation management program.

Social justice education. Social justice education encourages students to engage in critical reflection on dehumanizing sociopolitical conditions and actions they can take to alter those conditions (Adams et al., 2007). Social justice education takes an intentional approach to increase students’ awareness about systems of power and empower them to work toward greater equity (Bell, 2016; Warner & Dillenschneider, 2019). Social justice education supports students in uncovering the history and present existence of privilege and oppression and in situating themselves within the larger social system (Warner & Dillenschneider, 2019).

Service-learning for social justice. Students gain awareness and understanding of complexities confronting the increase of diverse populations when educators use service-learning to teach social justice education (Culyer, 2018; Rice & Horn, 2014; Parkinson et al., 2009). “Many social justice education environ-

ments are experiential by design” (Warner & Dillenschneider, 2019, p. 326). Both traditional social justice education and service-learning provide students with opportunities to develop the skills necessary to lead in increasingly diverse and global communities (Warner & Dillenschneider, 2019; Engberg & Fox, 2011).

Though outdoor experiential education has grappled with social justice (Warren et al., 2014; Warner, Meerts-Brandsma & Rose, 2020; Warner & Dillenschneider, 2019), there appears to be a gap in other segments of recreation education. Lee et al. (2016) recommend that understanding the value diverse groups place on nature and outdoor recreation should be a priority for both the practical and academic sides of the leisure field. Therefore, parks and recreation management education should explicitly teach social justice, which can be accomplished effectively through service-learning. This practice-based approach provides an example.

Practice Description

Course Description

This class was taught in a Sport Management program in a Business Administration department at a small, private college in the Southeast. This newly developed course was being taught for the first time. The course enrolled 25 third- and fourth-year students who were Sport Management and Hospitality and Tourism Management majors. All the students were white, 72% of the class was male, and 92% of the students were American.

The course explored the processes, procedures, resources, and issues surrounding the management of parks and addressed the major environmental, social, and political forces influencing recreation resource management. The class was taught as “Community-Integrative Education” (CIE). CIE, an institutional designation, requires courses to integrate a project that comprises at least 20% of the final grade and involves at least 10 hours of work. The project must apply academic knowledge to community issues, engage intellectually with the process of understanding a problem and generating a solution, evaluate outcomes and reflect on academic, professional, and civic learning (Flagler College, 2019). It must also demonstrate initiative in a collaboratively planned and reciprocally beneficial project that adds value to their community partner, and improve critical thinking, professional skills, understanding of diversity and concerns for community issues (Flagler College, 2019). The learning outcomes were determined by narrowing this institutional CIE description and

tailoring it to the content area. The course endeavored to: 1. apply parks and recreation management academic knowledge to community issues, 2. reflect on student learning and 3. explain diversity and social justice issues in parks and recreation management.

The course centered on a semester-long service-learning project in collaboration with the local public Parks and Recreation department. The instructor designed the project in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation department professional staff the summer preceding the fall academic semester. The purpose was to enhance the parks and recreation management curriculum by applying course work to community recreation needs and fostering a sustainable relationship with the local Parks and Recreation department.

The students’ service project entailed “adopting” a local park, including working on-site to improve it. The project included creating goals, developing a timeline, conducting research, executing their plan, and professionally presenting their results (see Appendix B). In three groups, the students 1. created a new recreational amenity site plan including access for persons with disabilities, 2. designed new educational signage, and 3. removed invasive flora species.

The students force ranked the options for their group’s focus – site plan, signage, or invasive species – in an interest survey administered through the class learning management system. The instructor divided students into groups where almost all students received their first-choice option. However, the instructor attempted to balance the capabilities of each group, ensuring each group comprised academically strong members and both male- and female- identifying students. The class sustained close contact with the Parks and Recreation department staff member, who approved their goals and timelines, supervised on-site work, answered questions, and assessed the quality of their final product.

The course contained specific units on social justice issues, including readings on the history of Native Americans and the parks systems, racial discrimination in parks and parks administration, and recreational access for persons with disabilities and the Americans with Disabilities Act. These modules included textbook chapters, academic journal articles, news articles, video, and webinar content (see Appendix A).

Outcomes

The course utilized end-of-term course evaluations as a measurement tool. The evaluations were ad-

ministered online using the survey platform Campus Labs and garnered an 80% response rate. Eighty-five percent of students completing the evaluation agreed that the course created opportunities for students to apply course content outside the classroom and involved students in hands-on projects, meeting the course learning outcome regarding application. However, only 50% thought the course introduced stimulating ideas about the subject.

To meet the learning outcome that required students to reflect on their learning, students wrote reflection papers at the end of the semester after completing the project. The instructor utilized descriptive coding to identify common themes. Descriptive coding assigns basic labels to data to provide an inventory of topics (Saldana, 2015).

In their personal reflections, students reported using communication skills and demonstrating leadership. Overall, students perceived self-efficacy was very high. All of the students argued that they were successful in meeting the project requirements and deserved high grades. The students' perception that they all excelled did not align with the peer evaluation data. Each student ranked their group members on scale of 1–5 on participation, task completion, quality and quantity of work, communication, and teamwork, and force ranked all the students in the group against each other. In each of the three groups, students agreed that one or two students significantly outperformed the others. Students accurately reported needing to improve on delegation and equitable distribution of work among group members and time management. The course evaluations demonstrated 75% of the respondents agreed that they were frequently encouraged to reflect on and evaluate what they had learned.

To determine if students could explain diversity and social justice issues in parks and recreation management, the course measured content knowledge with multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions on quizzes. The quizzes were administered online through the learning management system. Eighty-eight percent of students could correctly recognize the origin and consequences of racial segregation in the parks and define theories that explain the lack of non-white visitors to parks. Eighty-three percent of students could identify the legal obligation recreation managers have to persons with disabilities. Sixty-three percent could describe organizational efforts recreation agencies utilized to increase park

usage by marginalized populations. Sixty-seven percent could identify the greatest challenge preventing parks and recreation agencies from being inclusive to all members of a community, which is the difficulty of developing staff capacity and competency around diversity, equity, and inclusion (NRPA, 2021). However, on the course evaluations, only 60% of students reported feeling encouraged to share ideas/experiences with others whose backgrounds and viewpoints differed from their own.

The final projects were assessed on their execution – if the group met their goals on time – and the quality of their presentation explaining their process and product to the Parks and Recreation professional staff. Parks and Recreation professional staff and the instructor used the same grading rubric, initially completing it individually. Then, they met to compare rubrics and arrive at consensus.

The Parks and Recreation professional staff were satisfied with the final products, though expressed some skepticism about college students' procrastination and overall work ethic. Both instructor and staff noted obvious variation in the effort and contribution of individual group members. Staff and the course instructor held a debriefing session to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the class design and implementation and to suggest improvements.

While students displayed progress on learning outcomes and skill development, student course evaluations indicated students did not enjoy the course. In the course evaluations comments, some students expressed concern that their expectations of the course did not align with their previous experiences in the sport management program. One student noted, "I felt as if there was no connection to sports or recreation" and another said, "Not that relevant to the major, however was interesting."

In personal conversations with the instructor, students complained about the scope of group work, struggling with the interpersonal challenges of working in large teams. Students also expressed dissatisfaction with the manual labor involved in park management and the physical demands of fieldwork, with at least two students registering their grievances with the upper administration of the College. In the course evaluation comments, one student remarked on "hours spent on gardening that taught us nothing." Arguably, student satisfaction is a lesser concern than the efficacy of the pedagogy.

"Educators should work closely with both organizations and students to provide meaningful projects that will enhance the service-learning experience."

However, with this feedback, the course could be revised to mitigate student satisfaction concerns.

Implications

With revision, this model can be replicated to successfully teach social justice. College students in parks & recreation management programs can adopt a park as a service-learning project. This project meets Stevens' (2008) goals of helping others, applying class knowledge in the real world, mastering practical skills, gaining an appreciation for diversity, and additionally can address issues of equity and inclusivity. This project fills a gap in a pre-professional discipline that needs more emphasis on social justice.

As Breunig (2013) recommended, educational approaches should extend beyond increasing students' knowledge about themselves to focus on promoting pro-social and pro-environmental behavior change. To ensure that students are making connections with the work they are doing and issues of equity, the course should include a reflective piece specific to social justice. Students should write reflection papers that ask them to explain how their changes to the park are impacting marginalized communities and to identify personal behavior changes they can enact to promote social and environmental change. The project guidelines should also require students to create, measure, and evaluate a goal specific to inclusivity in parks.

The class should also add content units specific to environmental justice, inclusion of LGBTQ+ communities in recreation, and Universal Design, a process that includes consideration of environments, facilities, equipment, programs, processes, lessons, and other resources, with the goal of inclusion for all people to the greatest extent possible (National disability authority, n.d.). Educators should work closely with both organizations and students to provide meaningful projects that will enhance the service-learning experience (Culyer, 2018). The pre-planning and coordination with Parks & Recreation staff take time and commitment from both the organization and the instructor to design projects of appropriate scope.

To improve student satisfaction, the instructor should articulate clear expectations before students enroll in the class. The instructor should explicitly cover the nature of fieldwork, the purpose of the course, the justification for and the expected benefits of service-learning and disseminate the information through multiple channels. To facilitate student understanding of how this class serves their interests, students should write reflection papers

connecting the skills they use in this project and what they learned about social justice to their major and to their intended profession. Instructors should also consider limiting the size of the class, creating smaller projects groups. Having fewer students in each group may mitigate some of the variability in individual student contribution as they would be less able to "hide" under the work of the stronger students in the group. This may also lessen some of the strong students' frustration with group dynamics.

Limitations & Next Steps

This practice-based approach had limitations, particularly due to the time and place in which it was situated. The course was not solely dedicated to learning outcomes explicitly tied to social justice. That lack of focus may have lessened the course's efficacy.

The course ran Fall semester 2020 during the COVID 19 pandemic. Though the course was offered in a face-to-face modality, following the institution's distancing and masking guidelines, student attitudes may have been impacted. Students may have not been as open to hands-on fieldwork when other outside-of -class opportunities were limited and many of their other classes were online. Several students in the class were required to quarantine due to exposure to COVID 19 during the semester, which may have made group work more difficult. Future attempts at producing a similar course would not likely have those same challenges.

The course's origin in a small, Southeastern, private college's Business Administration department mattered. The demographics of the student population in the class were very homogeneous, which limits students' abilities to learn from people different from themselves. This supports Barnhill et al. (2018) finding that sport management students are not as diverse as the general undergraduate population. This lack of diverse identities and perspectives may make it more difficult to interest students in experiential learning focused on social justice. Ruparelia (2014) noted a "stunning" level of resistance in a class devoted to social justice issues and that meaningfully grappling with racism in class leaves many white students feeling anxious, confused, ashamed, angry, or guilty (p. 830).

Though this practice-based approach was a single, initial endeavor, with revision a similar course can successfully use experiential learning to teach social justice in parks and recreation management. Next steps for faculty interested in replicating this course include contacting their local Parks and Recreation profession-

al staff to initiate discussion and foster a relationship. The community partner's collaboration is essential to ensure that the project is mutually beneficial. Faculty should also read the suggested resources to continue to educate themselves on the need for social justice education in this pre-professional discipline. Faculty should design additional learning outcomes specific to social justice. Faculty should also investigate their institution's support for service-learning. Since service-learning is a high-impact learning practice (White, 2018), institutions may have additional resources to assist faculty in course development or criteria the course must meet in order to receive the designation.

Significant work must be done in the provision of recreation and park services to all members of the community, including those who have been traditionally marginalized or underserved (Pitas et al., 2020). Those who care about parks and recreation should strive for equitable distribution of facilities, services, and benefits (Pitas et al., 2020). Parks and recreation management educators must be at the forefront of producing industry professionals committed to that work. ■

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Appendix A: Suggested Resources

- C2P2Grants (Director). (2013, April 03). *Outdoor and recreational accessibility webinar* [Video]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kl8OopC-3ZAE&t=1712s>
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Appendix B: Assignment Guidelines

Parks and Recreation Management Service-learning Project

This course centers on a service-learning project in collaboration with XXXXXX County Parks and Recreation that combines learning outside of the classroom with giving back to the community. Students will enhance the parks and recreation management curriculum by applying course work to community recreation needs, fostering a sustainable relationship with the Parks and Recreation department.

Public Recreation Service Project Learning

175 points total. Students will participate in service-learning with the class, in collaboration with XXXXXX County Parks and Recreation. In groups, students will identify, research, propose and execute solutions to community recreation issues at XXXX Beach park. **Students will need to be prepared to cover for students in their group who fall ill or have to quarantine/isolate due to exposure to COVID-19.**

Students will meet with primary contact XXXXXX, Parks Naturalist, for an introduction to the site. Students will tour the site. Students will be divided into groups to address: park signage, recreation usage & design, and invasive species. Details on the group expectations can be found below. Class time on most Fridays will be dedicated to group work on the service-learning project, meetings with XXXXXX, and field workdays.

Components:

Research Paper. 25 points.

Students will compile current ACADEMIC research on their issue and write a paper summarizing the literature and analyzing how to apply that research to their project.

Content:

- Literature review: reporting on current academic, peer-reviewed research on the group's topic
- Application: discussion of how the group can apply that research to their project

Format:

- Correct APA citation format, including title page, running headers, page numbers, headers, and references page
- Times new roman font, 11- or 12-point, 1 inch margins
- Correct grammar and spelling, including using active voice, third person, and academic tone
- Less than one direct quotation a page, no direct quotations over 2 lines
- Green Turnitin score

Grading:

- Students will be graded on the thoroughness and depth of their research, appropriateness of their sources, level and clarity of analysis, and writing style.
- Grading rubric will be posted in Canvas under files

Timeline. 15 points.

Content:

- Students will establish a timeline for their work, which will be approved by the instructor and Parks Naturalist.
- Students must determine project goals, tactics to reach those goals, deadlines and accountability for how the group duties will be divided between group members.
- Students will present the timeline and allocation of duties orally to instructor and Parks Naturalist. That presentation must meet professional standards. See departmental rubric for presentations which can be found in Canvas under files.

Format:

- Template of Gantt chart in Google sheets: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1itY4ghb-muyxZ30YSHo2pi156sw_LP9-UWrg08Q4DRfE/edit#gid=1709744959

Grading:

- Students will be graded on quality, relevance, and format of goals and timeline and on the quality of presentation skills.

Execution: 50 points.

Students successfully execute their plans, meet deadlines, and meet their final project goals. (This part of the project may change for the invasive species group if the College moves to online only classes, since we will not be able to work on-site.)

Grading:

- Students will be graded on the quality of their final product in consultation with the community partner.

Group presentation: 50 points.

In groups, students will orally present their final projects to employees of XXXXXX County Parks and Recreation during the final exam period. This is most likely going to be conducted virtually. Content of the presentation will vary by group, see details below.

Content:

- Students will display and explain the final outcome of their group project work.

Format:

- That presentation must meet professional standards, even if conducted on Zoom. See departmental rubric for presentations which can be found in Canvas under files.

Grading:

- Students will be graded on the quality of the content included in their presentation and on their presentation skills in consultation with the community partner staff.

Individual contribution and reflection. 25 points.

Students will write individual reflection papers about the experience, including justifying their contribution to the group effort.

Content:

- Explain your individual contribution to the group project. You may use this list as a guideline, but not all of the questions are required, nor is this list exhaustive: What was your contribution to the group? What specific work did you complete for the group? What were the best aspects of your performance? What were the worst? What did you learn from working in this group? How can you improve my performance next time? What did you do that helped the group most? What did you do that helped the group the least? What can you do to make your level of contribution more appropriate? What grade do you think you deserve? Why?

Format:

- Times new roman font, 11- or 12-point, 1 inch margins
- Correct grammar and spelling, including using active voice and academic tone

Grading:

- Students will be graded on amount and quality of contribution to achievement of group goals, insightfulness of reflection, and writing style. Grading rubric will be posted in Canvas under files.

Peer evaluation. 15 points.

Students will complete peer evaluations for each member of their group.

Format:

- Students will fill out excel sheet on group members. Posted in Canvas under files.

Grading:

- Students will be graded on the average of the feedback they received from their peers.

Group details:

Each group will have slightly different content requirements and expected outcomes depending on their focus.

Invasive species group (needs approximately 10 students):

- Research paper topic – invasive species in Florida coastal parks, conservation management of coastal parks, use of native species in coastal parks
- Project execution – actual removal of invasive species; create long term plan for continuing invasive species management at park – including species recommendations, timeline of removal days and public outreach for volunteers
- Presentation – before/after pictures of park; explain long term plan

Site Design and recreational use (needs approximately 9 students):

- Research paper topic – recreational design of coastal parks, identification of amenities/park design other beach properties have, focus on Americans with Disabilities Act and accessibility

- Project execution - data collection on site capacity, what current visitors are utilizing the site for and when the parking lot reaches capacity, bathroom usage, design and execute survey regarding public interest in future park amenities, status of existing amenities, and overall community thoughts regarding the site, recommendation/proposal for site design
- Presentation - exhibit data collection results, propose site design plan

Signage (needs approximately 6 students):

- Research paper topic – use of signage in parks, types of park signage, interactive displays/play-scapes (with a focus on ADA options) environmental education signage in coastal parks, identify signage similar parks are using,
- Project execution – assessment of park signage at other similar parks, design and creation of park signage and interactive display options
- Presentation – exhibit assessment of signage, present new signs/interactive displays

Fostering Self-Authorship and Changemaking: Insights from a Social Entrepreneurship Practicum

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Like many universities, ours has an overarching goal that its students learn to become effective citizens. Experiential courses that expose students to the complexity of the real world through community-based projects are designed to achieve learning outcomes associated with becoming a conscientious and socially responsible adult (Cornell University Office of Engagement Initiatives, 2021). These courses also promote the capacity for self-authorship, or the ability to define, for oneself, one's own beliefs, identity, and social relations (Baxter Magolda, 2001). Self-authorship, which often begins in traditional college-age years, emerges with a shift away from accepting uncritically the values, feelings and meaning of external authority and is fundamental to becoming a responsible citizen (Mezirow, 2000; Baxter Magolda & King, 2004, pp.6-8). Thus, many recognize that curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities can support students in this important transition (see, e.g., Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; Ignelzi, 2005; Hodge et al., 2009). To this end, Baxter Magolda has developed the Learning Partnerships Model (LPM), a framework for promoting self-authorship that challenges learners with epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal complexity. In this model, students are supported as learning partners by being validated for their capacity to know, having their learning situated in experience, and constructing meaning together with peers and the instructor (Baxter Magolda, 2004).

Our social entrepreneurship practicum reflects the core tenets of the Learning Partnerships Model and contributes to it by shining a light on the capa-

city of students to become changemakers in pursuit of social, economic, and environmental justice. Given the magnitude and severity of intractable human and environmental crises worldwide, we believe it is imperative we prepare students not only to make wise and conscientious decisions within existing systems, but also to be changemakers, able to engage others in creative, innovative, and practical ways that ultimately transform the root causes of these crises.

Background

In 2016, a group of students at our university established a volunteer-run, nonprofit grocery store to address alarming rates of food insecurity within our student body. They secured start-up funding from the undergraduate student assembly, permission from the university administration, and a legal home within a university-affiliated nonprofit organization. Yet, by 2018 Anabel's Grocery was floundering. In the spring of 2019, the student team decided to pause operations and, with the guidance of an instructor of social entrepreneurship, reimagine the store's business model, organizational structure, and overarching purpose. Together they created a practicum-based course to better understand the systemic roots of food insecurity, learn from their customers, and consider nonhierarchical leadership. Anabel's relaunched with a new revenue model, leadership framework, and staffing structure, which, while still volunteer-based, provides course credit through the now mandatory practicum. In this course, students apply principles of social entrepreneurship to examine how forces of racism and capitalism produce inequities in the food

system and discuss how alternative food initiatives, such as this nonprofit grocery store, can become public spaces for food justice (Holt-Giménez, 2017) and anti-racist action (Kendi, 2019). All of this is made real as they run every aspect of the grocery and its educational and outreach programs.

Line of Inquiry

The question we are exploring is how a collaboration between a practicum-based course and a social enterprise encourages students to examine, discuss, and apply complex social justice concepts and frameworks. Specifically, we investigate how this experience fosters in them a sense of self as changemaker, a form of self-authorship that includes the confidence to tackle justice issues in collaborative, creative, and practical ways. Applying the LPM framing, we first describe our pedagogical practice and then illustrate outcomes by drawing exemplars from student self-evaluation papers. The prompts for this end-of-the-semester self-evaluation ask students to reflect on 1) what they learned, in comparison to what they originally thought they might learn, 2) whether they had met their goals for the practicum experience, 3) unexpected outcomes and key takeaways, and 4) how this experience might inform their lives going forward. The prompts were purposefully open-ended and did not inquire explicitly about self-authorship or change making.

Of the 99 students over the four semesters captured by this study, 3% were first-year students, 18% were second-year, 32% were third-year, 43% were fourth-year, and 3% were Master's students. Fifty-one percent of the students identified as White, and 49% as students of color, of which 31% identified as being of Asian heritage. Regarding their major college, approximately 51% were in Agriculture and Life Sciences, 22% in Business, 11% in Human Ecology, 7% in Arts and Sciences, 4% in Industrial and Labor Relations, 3% in Engineering, and 1% in Architecture, Art and Planning.

Our primary role was not as researchers, but rather as instructor (Anke) and team facilitators (Sarah, Kelsey, Emily, Deanna, Chelsea, and Ryan). The team facilitators were students and therefore also participants. We employed a constructivist framework in our review of the students' reflection papers to emphasize the importance of participants' meaning-making regarding their experiences and development (Charmaz, 2000). We read and analyzed students' papers for patterns and themes that might

create distinguishing categories, starting with basic questions, such as, what did students learn, how did they learn, and what meaning did they make of it, specifically with respect to personal and social change? Through our analysis, we identified categories that align with the developmental framework of self-authorship with an emphasis on self as changemaker.

Description of Practice

Unlike most community-engaged course designs where students first learn about a community, then engage with a community partner, and, finally, step back to reflect (Bringle & Thatcher, 1995), our students are the community *and* the community partner. Moreover, because Anabel's is a student-run organization, the students and instructor are collectively the authors and the authority, wholly responsible for this venture's financial health and social impact. At the start of the semester, a new cohort of team members from the course joins those who have taken it previously. Early on, we signal our trust in everyone's ability, regardless of experience or academic major, to learn what is necessary to contribute fully. We encourage members to modify existing roles within the store to reflect their own skills and interests, recognizing that the knowledge and experiences each member brings contribute to our collective learning and success. These elements of our course design engage students as equal and capable learning partners, a central feature of the LPM (Baxter Magolda, 2004).

Theories of systems thinking, antiracism, collective economics, social entrepreneurship, and distributive leadership provide intellectual frameworks that reveal the complexity of how systems produce inequitable outcomes, how they are rooted in deeply embedded habits of minds and norms that we seldom examine or question, and what we might do to change them. These frameworks help our students identify and act on the root causes of social and environmental inequities, thus furthering their epistemological growth as changemakers. While these frameworks provide important scaffolding for understanding and action, students also learn to trust themselves (intrapersonal growth) and each other (interpersonal growth) as they navigate the moving parts and unforeseen circumstances of a real enterprise together. Acknowledging that social change arises from leadership of the many rather than the few (Schmitz, 2012), the organizational model of Anabel's distributes power across four self-governing committees. Decisions are made following an advice process (Laloux

& Wilber, 2014) that gives every member the agency to take initiative on any matter as long as advice is first sought of those most affected by the action and those with the most expertise on the subject. This practice reflects the autonomy and mutuality characteristic of the LPM (Baxter Magolda, 2004).

Since students manage the store for the entire semester, they engage in a continuous dialectic of learning, action, and reflection (Freier, 1993; Passarelli & Kolb, 2012). Multiple modalities of critical reflection provide opportunities to connect the dots between theory, action, and systems change. Three written reflection assignments are based on the DEAL model (**D**escribe, **E**xamine, **A**rticulate **L**earning) for critical reflection and meaning-making in service-learning (Ash & Clayton, 2009). In these short papers, students 1) describe and draw linkages between concepts from the course material, 2) examine and analyze their relevance for food justice, and 3) consider how what they have learned might inform their own actions and our work at Anabel's. In addition, a portfolio paper, with eleven prompts that ask students to reflect on their personal experiences with race, food, and leadership, is coupled with weekly meetings in groups of three or four during which students share their reflections. By hearing others' responses to the same prompts, students learn from multiple perspectives that deepen their own view, help build their intercultural competence, and challenge them to examine assumptions. Students build on this practice during class discussions where they explore the course material and consider its relevance to their day-to-day work of running Anabel's. Together, these reflection practices establish trusting relationships through vulnerability and openness that become the foundation for collective decision-making and problem solving.

In addition to the two weekly class sessions with concomitant assignments, students spend four to five hours a week helping run the store and its programs. At the end of the semester, each committee presents its accomplishments and updates the committee's manual with recommendations for the next cohort. This provides important continuity while allowing the store to evolve organically as a social enterprise and a venue for public action.

Goals and Impact

One of our hopes for this practicum course is to strengthen students' capacity to respond to a rapidly changing world that faces widespread and destabilizing economic, social, and environmental crises. Our goals align with the

epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions of the Learning Partnerships Model:

1. to foster the cognitive maturity to consider root causes of social and economic inequities and to act on this understanding;
2. to support the integration of this knowledge through an examination of multiple perspectives and a critical understanding of self in the world using reflective practices and dialogue;
3. to encourage interpersonal maturity by cultivating understanding and mutuality across difference through collaboration on a social venture; and
4. to strengthen self-confidence as well as confidence in others to transform systems by building a supportive community through the recursive cycle of action, reflection, and learning.

Our analysis of the students' reflections confirm that our social entrepreneurship practicum realizes these goals and helps build students' capacity for self-authorship and changemaking. Here, we offer brief exemplars.

Cognitive Maturity toward Changemaking

Systems thinking allows us to ask why the social and economic inequities that we observe in society are occurring. Generally, the complexity of how elements in a system interact and feed into each other to produce unjust outcomes are invisible to us. Yet, if we disregard these root causes, we perpetuate the problem. In her reflection, Julia shared that, to-date, her curricular and co-curricular work at the university hadn't asked her to consider the systemic roots of food disparities.

I research human metabolism in at-risk populations, work with a start up company to develop a mobile app for personalized nutrition plans, and volunteer for the Food Recovery Network to reduce food waste and improve food access, yet I have never before considered the underlying cause of social health discrepancies in relation to food.

Our consideration of how forces of racism and capitalism give rise to food inequities challenged Matthew to rethink his own decisions about food. Moreover, the experience of employing resource and power sharing practices through Anabel's gave him hope that systemic change is possible.

The readings, guest lectures, conversations, and videos on capitalism in the food system have radically challenged the way I see the world. I can now place my food and decisions made around my food in this larger narrative of the commodification of life, land, and labor. I think this will inform how I approach almost every challenge or topic going forward in my life. Additionally, Anabel's has provided me with a greater degree of hope in effectively engaging in systems changing work, hope that I never really found in my developmental coursework. I have a newfound interest and hope in collective economics and coalition building—essentially more faith in the ability of humans to organize themselves.

For Natalie, the experience with Anabel's allowed her to connect theory to action and large scale to small. She was particularly struck by how intentional we must be in our everyday interactions if we are to create more equitable systems.

This semester showed me that changemaking does not happen without looking at the world under a microscope. In the act of tearing down oppressive systems, it is even more important to build a system of change that encompasses all of our goals and ideals. In building this system, we must be honest with ourselves and each other. In moving forward in my career and in life, I hope to take the tenacious work ethic with regards to changemaking that I have seen in my Anabel's peers. This outlook on life is essential in the creation of meaningful, interconnected existence on micro and macro levels.

Integrating Identity as Changemaker

Because conversations about race and capitalism are deeply connected to our personal and collective identities, they often engender emotion and anxiety. By framing racism and capitalism as complex and historically rooted systems of power, we are able to step back from the personal and avoid ideological positioning. Bolstered by our group agreements to listen with curiosity, suspend right/wrong thinking, and sit with discomfort, students develop the capacity to deconstruct their own and others' assumptions, consider diverse perspectives, and hold space for genuine dialogue. Joseph embraced the opportunity to unpack previously held beliefs. He realized that in order to truly hear different perspectives and examine his own identity, it was necessary for him to suspend his habitual right/wrong thinking.

Working at Anabel's, I did end up learning about food insecurity, racial justice, and ways to disrupt our capitalist food system, but in order to learn about these I had to remove some of my preconceived notions about them. Getting rid of previous ideas involved

diving deeper into the values of Anabel's. These values became especially important when it came to our small group discussions. I had to assume goodwill and acknowledge that there is no right or wrong way when it comes to discussing one's ideas. Coming from an upper-middle class household, I have been privileged enough to not have to experience food insecurity, so for that reason, I needed to suspend any judgement and actively listen.

For Annabelle, being able to have conversations that stretched her beyond her comfort zone ultimately gave her the confidence to have similar conversations with friends outside of class. She now feels prepared to continue this practice and learn independently.

I found myself willing to contribute to discussion more often as we got deeper into the course material as a group, and it even made me more comfortable talking about [these issues] outside of class with my friends and getting to listen to their perspectives on the course topics as well. I can clearly see how [this] supported my learning experience and it has also sparked my interest to continue learning about these topics outside of the class.

Collaborating and Learning as Equals

Interpersonal maturity is fostered when students share authority and expertise with their peers and construct knowledge together. Our nonhierarchical organizational structure and classroom culture invite students to take responsibility vis à vis others without reliance on an external authority. While uncomfortable at first, Gabby recognized that being intrinsically motivated was an important adult life skill. Moreover, by working with others who were similarly defining their own way, she came to realize how enriching it is, personally and for the collective, to make room for each person to contribute differently.

Although I was a little lost at first, I realized that this was an opportunity to finally devise goals for myself, instead of achieving the ones that other people had already laid out for me in the form of essays and tests, and to measure them with my own metrics. This class fast-forwarded the realization that I won't have letter grades forever, and that in order to own my achievements later in life, I have to continue to devise my own goals and metrics of success. [W]e're constantly being told that 'everyone is on their own journey' and that we should 'take life at our own pace.' While those words are comforting at the moment, they are quickly forgotten in the rigorous work culture of our institution and society. It is through my experiences at Anabel's that I've finally been able to internalize these words. This practicum has made me realize that no matter our background, we all have something to contribute, and

that we need not rush change, because change is slow, and it must be so in order to be sustainable.

Amanda reflected on the significance of contributing to a meaningful project with peers of different backgrounds but similar interests. What stood out was not so much the end product but the sense of connection and purpose she enjoyed.

I hadn't realized until this course how much I value working collectively and collaborating with others in a space that I care about. While I've been enjoying my time in college I think a component that I felt was missing was being engaged in the community and feeling like I was making valuable contributions as an individual. I think as students, especially, we get sucked into a tunnel of academics and stress, and lose sight of how we are contributing to our greater community. Being a part of this class brought me out of that tunnel and reminded me of the value of learning about and connecting with things that I care about, and doing that with others who come from very different backgrounds, but share similar interests.

Self-confidence and Confidence in Community to Effect Change

In this social entrepreneurship practicum, students examine the ingrained habits of mind and ways of being that underpin the dynamics of inequitable power and opportunity. They imagine and act on possibilities for a more just society. This experience of tackling the roots of an intractable problem, while also addressing the immediate need of food access, fostered self-confidence. While overwhelmed by the thought of just one person trying to change the food system, Emma felt empowered by the knowledge that others were working toward the same goal.

I believe that my greatest takeaway from this semester is the inspiration I drew from the community. I find it so exciting and motivating to see that so many other people care about the same issues that I do, and that there is a network of people all working towards the same goals. I greatly enjoyed learning about social entrepreneurship and how to reconstruct the workplace into a more open and inclusive environment. At times, thinking about the global food chain is overwhelming and even more so when thinking about ways to address such large issues. However, having the knowledge that there are people out there working towards creating just and sustainable food systems, and having worked closely with some of them, inspires me to continue to want to work in the food industry even with knowledge of all its shortcomings.

For Matt, being part of a workplace community that was transparent and inclusive and where

relationships matter was a welcome reprieve from the highly competitive environment he was accustomed to. He realized that this alternative not only works, but works well, and now envisions himself as someone who can help create similar spaces.

[T]hrough Anabel's I have become part of an amazing community of people. Anabel's has been an oasis from the competitive, individualistic culture that dominates. The flat governance and open book financial structure was so different from anything that I'm used to that at first it was disorienting. I look forward to sharing this experience in the future, doing what I can do to cultivate this kind of workplace; work where social relations are not treated as irrelevant but are instead an essential part of the work itself. I do not think this diminishes or takes away from the work, but actually enriches it.

Implications for Teaching and Learning

Our practice contributes to the learning outcomes of community-engaged curricula by supporting students to become changemakers who:

1. analyze the systemic forces that give rise to social, economic and environmental inequities;
2. engage with others in honest, reflective dialogue and openly examine held beliefs and knowledge;
3. cultivate trusting, caring relationships as a foundation for collaborative action and decision-making; and
4. become confident in themselves and others to bring about meaningful change toward a more just world.

We ask our students to do more than just work together on a project; we ask them to step out of their comfort zones, be vulnerable, question held beliefs, and innovate and co-create across differences of identity and experience. These are fundamental skills and abilities for community-based justice work.

To this end, openness, listening, and empathy are modeled in the classroom and reflected in our organization's declared agreements (assume goodwill; be our word; experience the edges; respect autonomy; design for the margins; create to regenerate; and recognize that impact matters). Mirroring principles of intergroup dialogue (Gurin-Sands et al., 2012) and human-centered design (Sinha, 2020), these agreements provide an important touchstone

for how we work together and in service to others. Moreover, by studying the historical and interdependent dynamics of economic and social systems, students learn to appreciate how we are all affected by the inequities our current systems produce, yet none of us is personally to blame for their existence. Similarly, when mistakes occur at Anabel's, we look at our internal operating systems to ask why they happened, rather than seek blame or fault. Thus liberated from the fear of being wrong, students are more willing to engage in difficult conversations, take responsibility, pursue creative ideas, and support each other in finding solutions. Reflecting on her experience within the dominant culture that prizes self-reliance, perfectionism, urgency, and productivity, Katie described Anabel's as a welcome antidote.

This entire semester I feel as if I've been on the edge of an entirely new world at our university. For my first two years (pre-pandemic), my lifestyle revolved around studying in libraries until midnight and 'grinding' on problem sets non-stop on weekends. I was always rushing towards the next thing and stacking my calendar back to back with barely any time to breathe. Anabel's and the community I found here have been a breath of fresh air. Anabel's culture of listening and assuming goodwill has created a safe and open space for me to explore. I found myself encouraged to be curious and try out new things, and not only that, I felt it was celebrated. It made me all the more engaged. I've also changed personally. I can now go on hour-long walks without feeling anxious or needing to be working. I feel as though, finally, I can stop and smell the roses.

Herein, we believe, lies the genesis of the intrinsic motivation we see amongst our students and their growing sense of agency as problem solvers and changemakers. It's not so much what they are doing, but how. For Sylvie, this practicum in social entrepreneurship gave her a new understanding of herself in the world as well as the skills and confidence to work with others toward a more just world.

Anabel's helped me be intentional with what I create and consume and how I relate with others and the world. It has helped empower me to share my thoughts with others in a way that helps promote justice. I hope to carry the confidence I have after being in this course with me as I continue to live and love and create and try to work towards justice in the world.

Next Steps

Cultivating and acting on being a changemaker are lifelong endeavors. Student reflections from this collaboration between an academic course and a social venture confirm that a community-based

learning practice can support them on this journey. By validating students as equal partners in a real world social justice project, giving them agency to make decisions and mistakes together, and challenging them to examine systems as historically rooted and socially constructed, we embolden students to be creative, courageous, and connected to others. This experience fostered in our students a deeper understanding of injustices in society and cultivated individual and collective agency to effect change.

Yet, such intensive practicum experiences require considerable resources and university buy-in. If they are to be supported, assessments that confirm their short and long term impacts are essential. This article is based on evidence from students' immediate reflections of their experience. We plan to interview students at two and five-year intervals to understand how the confidence they gained from this practicum may inform their personal, professional and civic engagement as changemakers. ■

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Using Liminality to Understand How Identity and Temporary Status Influence Interns' Vulnerability

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Issues of wage exploitation, sexual harassment, discrimination, and substandard learning experiences during required, for-credit internships have been documented across a number of disciplines (Kvansy et al., 2017). Many fields have institutionalized the expectation to take on a (usually unpaid) internship. These issues relate to social and economic justice in two ways: first, students with greater access to social and economic resources have greater ability to find and complete an internship whereas other students find unpaid internships to be a costly barrier to entry; second, students performing the internships are vulnerable because as they often lack basic protections and are incentivized to not speak out against poor treatment (Bocchiario et al., 2012; McLeod et al., 2019; Roscigno, 2019). Consequently, although required for-credit internships have potential to provide students with experiential learning benefits, those benefits are likely greater for students who already have means and they must be weighed alongside the issues of sexual harassment and discrimination, which are disproportionality felt by minority students.

In this article, we focus on the issue of identity formation related to the internship because identity formation provides a crucial theoretical foundation for understanding social and economic justice outcomes. The formation of two different identities are relevant here, first is the formation of a professional identity that occurs during an internship. Using the concept of liminality (van Gennep, 1909; Turner, 1969) we view the internship as a space during which interns transition between their previous identity as a student and their new identity as a professional. Viewing the internship as a liminal space helps to understand the larger transition that the intern is experiencing when they are not yet a professional but also not quite a student anymore. The second relevant identity formation is the temporary identity that people develop as they step into the role of an in

tern. Saks and Ashforth (1997) posited that people create a temporary identity when they enter a temporary space (e.g., internship) as a means of coping and functioning while protecting their core identity. Similar to literature studying temporary workers (Garsten, 1999), the temporary nature of interns' roles and identities is critical for understanding how power differentials emerge and operate during internships that cause interns to experience and persist through poor learning experiences and exploitative work relationships, as well as how these factors influence the longer-term development of a professional identity.

In this theoretical paper we elaborate on the nature of temporary identities and identity formation and how they are related to issues of exploitation and justice in internships. By viewing the internship as a period where a person is transitioning and as an intersection between two identities (student and professional), we can better examine the dynamics of their temporary identity and experiences as an intern. Our theoretical framework explains some of the key underlying social and economic justice issues present in internships and it also highlights avenues for educators to intervene to improve the internship learning experience for all students.

Theoretical Framework

The concept of liminality originates in the field of anthropology and the work of van Gennep (1909) and Turner (1969) and focuses on how changes take place during a rite of passage. A liminal space is the transitional period or threshold between two states where there is a distinct before and after (Turner, 1969). Liminal spaces include individual experiences, such as the transition between adolescence and adulthood that is often marked by a religious ritual, and collective experiences, such as holidays (that separate two seasons) and commercial flights (that transition between two destinations). In the organizational or workplace

context, liminal spaces include a new worker's time as a trainee and the formation of a new organization (Söderlund & Borg, 2018). Within the literature, Söderlund and Borg (2018) identified that liminality has been referred to as a process (e.g., training, forming a new organization), a position (e.g., temporary worker), and as a place (e.g., a festival, a sports event).

An internship can be seen as an individual liminal position that is in between the academic and professional spaces, where the intern is shedding their identity as a student and forming their identity as a professional. Mele et al. (2021) used the lens of liminality to study psychology internships, finding that, like other transitions, internships involve a change in identity and status for the individual. Psychology interns in the study expressed feeling complex emotions, including confusion, insecurity, anxiety, and ambiguity, as well as an unclear status when interacting with patients and staff as they were no longer seen as a student, but had not yet achieved the status of a professional psychologist (Mele et al., 2021). This range of emotions and the presence of paradoxical identities have been seen in other types of temporary employment arrangements (Söderlund & Borg, 2018), and carry implications for the role of the supervisor and other factors that can influence the transition being experienced by an intern (Hawkins & Edwards, 2015; Mele et al., 2021). As a liminal space, an internship provides for a unique and important transformational experience for people forming new identities as professionals, but the complexities of this transition are vast and underexplored, particularly the dynamics that lead to the positions of vulnerability and powerlessness for the interns (Beech, 2011; Garsten, 1999; Hawkins & Edwards, 2015).

The following sections focus on how students form their new identities related to their internship and how that factors into issues of social justice. First, we explore how identities are formed. Then we discuss the power dynamics within the liminal space of the internship. Last, we discuss how the identities of people from marginalized backgrounds are affected by this process.

How Identities are Formed in a Liminal Space

Van Gennep (1909) described social rituals and transitions as following particular patterns: first a separation phase, where the individual leaves behind their original state or identity, second, a liminal phase, marked

by ambiguity, instability, and uncertainty, and finally, an incorporation phase, where the individual takes on their new identity or status. As a liminal phase, the internship provides a space for questioning, learning, and even rejecting different possible (typically professional) identities (Hawkins & Edwards, 2015; Turner, 1969), often with a significant emotional component (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014; Söderlund & Borg, 2018). Garsten's (1999) examination of temporary workers provides a useful comparison when examining interns, as they note that being a temp is:

Open to definition. It may turn out to be a road to permanent employment, an explorative phase in the sphere of work and organization or a passage to a shift in career. It may likewise prove to be a dead-end street, with an increased sense of marginality in relation to organizational resources and to the labour market. (p.603)

Within all this ambiguity, however, there is some structure in how students may experience these transitions and form their new identity.

Beech (2011) posits that liminality can be driven by internal or external forces represented as a spectrum with experimentation on one end and recognition at the other. Experimentation refers to individuals taking a central and active role in creating their new identity. Recognition refers to people encountering new external information (e.g., knowledge conveyed from colleagues or supervisors at the internship) that might shock and surprise them and result in an epiphany that influences the creation of their new personal and/or professional identity. Reflection incorporates the internal elements of experimentation and the external elements of recognition; that is, a person develops their new identity through a mix of inputs from their environment and through their own questioning and exploration. The extremes of experimentation and recognition both apply to internships because some interns have the opportunity to shape their experience and guide the development of their new identity whereas others have more closely-regimented experience dictated by course requirements and rigid organizational cultures.

As interns step into this extended period of liminality, or in-betweenness, the literature suggests there is opportunity for growth and creativity that can lead to positive outcomes (Winkler & Mahmood, 2015). However, the literature presented here also underscores the importance of external

factors and the immediate environment on a person who is in the developmental phases of a new identity that is often seen and treated as marginal and inferior within the organization (Beech, 2011; Garsten, 1999; Winkler & Mahmood, 2015). In sum, the process of identity formation in a liminal space may include oscillating between instances of outside influence and self-driven identity formation (Beech, 2011; Söderlund & Borg, 2015), but is nearly always accompanied by a range of mixed emotions amidst the uncertainty and a low status of power.

Power Dynamics

Although educational internships are often considered as one of many types of experiential learning, they differ from other types of educational experiences in terms of the unique power dynamics that are created around the learner. Most obviously, learners enter new relationships with site managers and other organizational actors. These new relationships are also often an ambiguous mix of teacher-student and employee-employer. Current labor law in the United States generally recognizes this ambiguity and exempts interns from compensation under the Fair Labor Standards Act so long as the student is the “primary beneficiary” within the internship arrangement (see: DeCamp et al., 2015; Mersol, 2016). This updated standard pulled back from the previous stance asserted by the Department of Labor that had a stricter delineation between an intern and an employee (Department of Labor, 2010), and has made it easier for organizations to avoid paying interns while treating them more like employees. Moreover, unpaid interns are ineligible for workplace protections such as Title VII, which prohibits discrimination (McLeod et al., 2019). Thus, unpaid interns are often encouraged to act and learn like employees in a professional environment, but without any of the institutional protections afforded to employees.

Further contributing to the vulnerability and powerlessness of interns is their temporary status and their professional aspirations. As found in literature on other types of temporary workers, the temporary status of a worker does not allow them to fully establish themselves within an organization, leaving them as part of the periphery and arguably the lowest status members of the organization (Garsten, 1999). Temporary and peripheral workers are also conditioned to accept unproductive, discriminatory, or unfair behaviors from other organization members to protect their reputation, especially when seeking full-time employment (Keuhn & Corrigan, 2013; Rodino-Colocino & Beberick, 2015; Walker et

al., 2021). The institutionalized norms reinforced by this system discourage interns dissenting or resisting harmful treatment (Perlin, 2012; Walker et al., 2021).

In addition to the new relationship with a site manager and the ambiguous context in which that relationship operates, for-credit interns also maintain a relationship with their educational departments. An interns’ relationship with their home department is likely to be an important resource during the internship—for example, students can ask their academic supervisor to intervene if site managers are flouting their educational obligations. However, the academic component of an internship also creates additional pressures, especially when students must meet specific degree requirements, such as completing an internship within a specific time frame, earning a certain number of hours, and gaining positive evaluations from a site supervisor, in order to graduate. These pressures often influence how interns behave when finding and completing internships. For example, Odio (2017) found that sport management students’ main concern when searching for an internship was meeting their degree requirements while operating within their financial means, and many expressed the willingness to sacrifice a quality internship in order to avoid delaying graduation. It is likely that these students and others will tolerate poor educational experiences, and perhaps even exploitative work relationships, if they need an internship to graduate.

Collectively, for-credit internships introduce complex and novel power relations that learners may be experiencing for the first time. Although the specifics of these power relations will depend on the unique context of each internship, most interns will find that the site manager is the most important person in their new learning experience. Following Hawkins and Edwards’ (2015) research on liminality in leadership learning, we can theorize the role of the site manager as a leader who possesses power during the vulnerable process by which learners navigate liminality and develop a new temporary organizational identity. Hawkins and Edwards (2015) drew on Foucauldian theorizing to note that knowledge is produced out of relations of power (Foucault, 1979). The educator, or, in this context, the site manager is a figure of authority and dispenser of legitimate knowledge. For this reason, and also due to the complex power relations noted above, site managers occupy a position of power and have inordinate influence over internship structure and outcomes. They will also have inordinate influence over the liminal space and temporary identity construction process. For example, Hawzen et al. (2018) identified how

many sport management interns had internalized norms about working long hours for little or no remuneration as part of their internship and class preparation. Irrespective of whether these professional identity norms are beneficial for students' holistic development, they are clearly advantageous for site managers in the sport industry, many of whom use unpaid internships to deal with increased work that accompanies seasonal fluctuations in demand.

This is not to say that site managers will always abuse their positions of power. However, it is necessary to consider the complicated interests at play in an internship, including the site managers' need to put organizational goals first, and how these might affect interns. Large scale evidence for site managers prioritizing organizational goals, especially profit-making, over learning goals comes from economic research of apprenticeship systems in Germany and Switzerland finding that some companies employ apprentices to lower the cost of production rather than to invest in training skilled individuals (Wolter & Ryan, 2011). Thus, many abuses of the internship relationship might not be seen as abuse at all, but a more subtle prioritization of what the organization and manager need that take advantage of the liminal space and temporary identity created during an internship.

Intersection of Identities

Hawkins and Edwards (2015) note that students from diverse backgrounds are often separated from their pre-existing social ties and conventions and are subjected to a new and unfamiliar form of pedagogy. Indeed, it is likely that liminal spaces and identities, and the power relations at play, operate differently for students depending on the pre-existing identities and resources they bring to the internship, particularly given the white-male origins of experiential education and the white-male norms that still dominate many organizations (Hindman & Walker, 2020; James, 1996). To this point, the identities discussed have been limited to the temporary identity as an intern, and the identity as a student being shed as a professional identity is formed, however, students have other pre-existing identities that must be considered as they are relevant for examining the issues of social and economic justice.

A survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) showed that students from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds are underrepresented in paid internships (NACE, 2020). Black students in particular, who disproportionately make use of campus career centers compared to students from other groups, are at the largest disparity when it comes

to paid internships (NACE, 2020). Speaking to this population, Bonner (2011) argues that that African American students perpetually exist in a state of liminality (i.e., identity formation) throughout their college years. Citing the concept of a "double consciousness" introduced by W.E.B. DuBois, Bonner (2011) posits that African American students are constantly navigating a dualism between their academic and social self.

Considering that students are already navigating the development of their own personal, academic, and social selves, the development of a professional identity is not a process that should be viewed in a void. Allen et al. (2013) note that students seeking to adhere to the norms imposed by society for becoming the "ideal" worker in order to become more employable has profound implications that are inherently classed, gendered, and raced. Similar work in the area of disability argues that these intersecting identities represent forms of "oppression and exclusion" (Liasidou, 2013). These issues and inequalities, which are present in the labor market, are exacerbated through work placements in higher education (Allen et al., 2013; Burgstahler & Bellman, 2009). These dynamics are personified through the experiences of one student who used his ethnic identity as an asset or "unique selling point . . . to be exploited for commercial benefit" (Allen et al., 2013, p. 447), and a working-class student during a placement who experienced anxiety as she struggled with the external pressures to conform to the lifestyle and emotional standard of her male and middle-class co-workers (Allen et al., 2013). These anecdotes demonstrate the additional struggle faced by students with multiple visible and invisible intersecting identities that are not normally considered when examining the experiences of interns forming a professional identity. The range of emotions, anxiety, ambiguity, and powerlessness stemming from the internal and external processes and pressures associated with internships rarely account for the class, gender, race, or ability of the intern and the additional challenges many interns face as they attempt to adapt to an environment in which they are an outsider.

Discussion

Although the benefits of internships are often justifiably touted in education and industry, there remains a need to closely scrutinize internship practices. Examining internships through the lens of liminality, and therefore identity formation, provides a useful perspective for discussing and understanding what interns experience. The unclear transitional status of interns moving from student to professional manifests with confusion, insecurity, anxiety, and ambiguity as they

struggle with external forces that heavily influence their current state and the formation of their new identity (Beech, 2011; Mele et al., 2021). The norms imposed by the educational institution, the industry expectations, and, in some cases, legal status serve to ensure compliance and acceptance of their status as relatively powerless (DeCamp et al., 2015; Walker et al., 2021). These norms alone present a threat to social and economic justice, as the incentives across many industries are set against interns speaking out against or resisting poor treatment, exploitation, or even sexual harassment. Social and economic justice issues are exacerbated for interns that do not conform to the white male prototype who must navigate the additional burden of adopting organizational identities that are often narrow and exclusive. The process of identity formation and the complex challenges faced largely go unnoticed and unrecognized in the literature and in practice, but still contribute to inequality in access and experience during a pivotal career stage. With this theoretical understanding in mind it is imperative for instructors, supervisors, researchers, and others with influence over the internship process to help promote equity and inclusion.

Practical Implications for Experiential Learning

An appreciation for the transitional and ambiguous state of interns, their relative powerlessness, and the intersecting identities that influence their experiences can inform practices to address the social and economic injustices that can emerge as a result. First among the recommendations for practice is for academic instructors and internship supervisors to be aware of the precarious and ambiguous status (Mele et al., 2021). Supervisors should empower students to engage in more experimentation while helping balance the external influences of the internship environment through reflection, and make sense of the field's current norms and expectations as they form their professional identity (Hawkins & Edwards, 2015). Preparing students for the experiences of liminality will help them take on more opportunities for experimentation and be aware of situations where unequal power relations might be abused.

A second recommendation is to continually examine the structures of power. Interns possess a low status within their organization and are largely incentivized to endure poor treatment when it occurs rather than speak out and risk delaying graduation and developing a negative reputation within the industry (Bocchiaro et al., 2012; Roscigno, 2019). Developing and promoting channels for reporting poor conditions or treatment during internships is

a positive step, however, this should not be relied upon as the primary method for ensuring a good experience as it disproportionately burdens the intern. Instead, as recommended by Steiner (2019), internship coordinators should facilitate and participate in discussions with the site supervisors and students. Relatedly, instructors should monitor and vet internship sites to ensure they possess positive cultures that stress equity and fairness, and refuse to approve internships at sites that do not. Overall, academic departments must recognize that institutionalizing internships as a curriculum requirement contributes to the internship power dynamic so they must use this position of authority to help students. Current labor laws are not enough. Interns need to know that they can rely on their departments to take their side and fix problems with site managers.

Finally, there is a need to continually examine the pedagogical and professional experiences of students through an intersectional lens. Particularly for white-male dominated fields such as engineering (Powell & Sang, 2015), sport (Aicher & Wells, 2013), journalism (Meyers & Gayle, 2015; Steiner, 2019), and hospitality (La Lopa & Gong, 2020), interns from diverse backgrounds are likely to have less access and be vulnerable to various forms of poor treatment. Instructors should sponsor students from under-represented backgrounds to help them overcome access discrimination, and then provide support through mentorship to help navigate any discrimination they may face. From a pedagogical perspective, instructors should continually review the design of their internship courses and take steps to make them more inclusive such as prioritizing learning outcomes, avoiding one-size-fits-all policies or approaches, and grounding pedagogical decisions in theory rather than in established practice (Warren, 1998).

Future Research

Within the scope of this paper we focused largely on issues that related to social and economic justice pertaining to race, gender, class, and ability. However, there is an undeniable need for continued studies in these areas and for a broader examination of how other identities are affected as well (e.g., immigration status, sexuality, gender identity). Future research should continue to examine the process of identity formation for interns of all backgrounds in order to provide a deeper understanding. Furthermore, research could contribute in this area by identifying, testing, and promoting new methods for evaluating internship environments. Internships should provide challenges for interns to overcome, but those

challenges should be equal for all interns. Being able to evaluate organizations for their ability to deliver on equity and inclusion should be prioritized. ■

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Promoting Educational Equity: Embedding Transformative Social and Emotional Learning in Experiential Learning

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College enrollment and graduation rates among Latinx and Black students have grown over the past 20 years (McFarland et al., 2019). Yet, inequities across racial and ethnic groups persist. This is concerning given that college completion is related to remaining above the poverty line across the lifespan. Research has shown that humanitarian reasons may underlie the motivation to pursue higher education among minoritized youth. Latinx and Black youth have expressed a desire for meaningful educational and work paths (DeLuca et al., 2016; Tuck, 2012). College has been viewed not simply as a vehicle for minoritized students' own personal economic mobility, but also as a mechanism to uplift students' families and communities (Li-Grining et al., accepted; Uriostegui et al., 2021).

Guided by the integration of strength-based frameworks, this manuscript will explore how experiential learning may serve a dual purpose: (1) helping students enact social change while simultaneously (2) reaching their education goals. More specifically, our inquiry explores how *social and emotional competencies (SECs)* play a role in the ways that experiential learning can help advance the social and economic status of students and their families and communities, as well as aid students in their pursuit of broader public goals, such as working toward environmental and racial justice.

Background on Transformative Social and Emotional Competencies

There are five core SECs: self-management (e.g.,

motivation), self-awareness (e.g., identity), social awareness (e.g., empathy), responsible decision-making (e.g., problem solving), and relationships skills (e.g., social engagement; Durlak et al., 2015). The process of acquiring SECs is referred to as *social and emotional learning (SEL)*. Existing literature on SEL spans preschool to college, but adults, including college students, have received far less attention in prior SEL research (Conley, 2015; Durlak et al., 2015).

The five SECs can play a role in equity, and increasing equity is central in the concept of *transformative SEL (T-SEL)*. Jagers et al. (2019) describes *transformative social and emotional competencies (T-SECs)* as cultural assets, where these skills are viewed as critical to the development of students becoming justice-oriented citizens, given T-SECs' potential to empower students from marginalized groups and their allies. More specifically, Jagers et al. (2019) has defined the five T-SECs as follows. Self-awareness involves understanding the link between one's personal and sociocultural identities (e.g., critical self-awareness). Self-management includes persistence despite facing challenges at individual and group levels (e.g., problem-focused coping that fixes the issue at hand, rather than the way one perceives it). Social awareness entails understanding social norms across diverse contexts and acknowledging resources and supports within familial, education, and community settings (e.g., critical social awareness). Relationship skills are perceived as including conflict resolution across settings with varying social norms

(e.g., collaborative problem solving). Responsible decision-making includes students' engagement in responsible decision-making for themselves and others across differing contexts (e.g., distributive justice).

Like SEL, T-SEL plays an important role in youths' education and career paths. Prior work has found higher racial/ethnic identity to be positively related to career decision self-efficacy (Bonifacio et al., 2018) and career decidedness (Duffy & Klingaman, 2009) among Latinx and Black college students. In contrast, experiences of discrimination and race-related stressors have been linked with less career decision self-efficacy (Bonifacio et al., 2018). Also, support from family and community has emerged as an important factor underlying the attainment of educational and career goals by low-income youth of color (Arnold et al., 2012; Bonifacio et al., 2018; Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Sledge, 2012).

Problem Statement and Questions

Given that T-SEL may contribute to students' success during and after college, there is a pressing need to understand the ways that college supports can foster the development of young adults' T-SECs. For example, recent research suggests that minoritized students at historically white universities desire "radical growth," meaning that they seek safe spaces where they can develop conceptual frameworks and narratives about the representation of their identities in the dominant culture (Keels, 2020). A key college support is the offering of experiential learning opportunities. Experiential learning that explicitly focuses on T-SEL, which includes a commitment to social change, may be particularly poised to help college students address a wide range of equity issues, including topics related to social, economic, environmental, and racial justice. Thus, the present manuscript sought to answer the following questions: (1) What existing theory focuses on students' cultural assets in higher education? (2) How should we build on this theory in ways that can guide the use of T-SEL practices in college settings with social justice missions? (3) Following this expanded theory, what methods and approaches could facilitate the use of T-SEL practices in the context of justice-driven higher education institutions?

Theoretical Framework

The culturally engaging campus environments (CECE) model (Museus, 2014) is an extant theoretical framework that centers on college students' cultural assets. The CECE model of college success defines

cultural engagement in terms of *cultural relevance* and *cultural responsiveness*. Cultural relevance refers to whether students feel that campuses reflect their cultural backgrounds and identities, which includes *cultural familiarity* (e.g., faculty who understand students' cultural backgrounds), *culturally relevant knowledge* (e.g., students learn about and share knowledge about their cultural communities), *cultural community service* (e.g., students engage in research to solve problems affecting their cultural communities), *meaningful cross-cultural engagement* (e.g., students discuss societal problems with others from varying backgrounds), and *culturally validating environments* (e.g., students' cultural identities are valued). In contrast, cultural responsiveness involves *collectivist cultural orientations* (e.g., campuses value teamwork), *humanized educational environments* (e.g., students feel that their humanity is recognized by faculty), *proactive support* (e.g., staff who go to great lengths to provide students with helpful information), and *holistic support* (e.g., students have a trusting relationship with at least one faculty or staff member who can provide them with information and support). Cultural relevance and cultural responsiveness are viewed as influencing students' development by fostering, for example, a sense of belongingness, which predicts college persistence. Notably, CECE indicators have been related to more of a sense of belonging among students overall, as well as across groups of students who identified as white vs. belonging to a racial and ethnic minority group (Museus et al., 2018).

Exploration of Conceptual Models

Missing from the CECE model is how students' development may be shaped by T-SEL and how higher education supports students' career readiness. This is notable given that increasing college graduation rates among minoritized youth are steps toward social and economic justice. Experiential learning can offer a chance for students to participate in cultural community service and opportunities for their professional development, which may both promote college persistence. In a recent study by Druery and Brooms (2019), students described improvements in self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, self-management, and responsible decision-making as they reflected on their participation in a program specifically designed to support college success among students who identify as Black males. All the participants graduated from college, which suggests that college supports and opportunities that reflect cultural relevance and cultural responsiveness may improve SEL, which in turn may predict college completion.

"It is noteworthy that critical consciousness has been linked with career development outcomes, particularly among under-resourced youth of color."

Also, the CECE model does not speak to collaborative action against injustice, which is central to T-SEL. The self-management component of T-SEL includes *collective efficacy* (Jagers et al., 2019), which traditionally refers to whether neighbors feel that they as a group have the capability of taking action in a coordinated and interdependent fashion on matters pertinent to their shared well-being (Sampson et al., 1998). Collective efficacy could operate within educational contexts (Jagers et al., 2019). For example, experiential learning may provide educators and students with the opportunity to engage in critical examination of inequities and collaboratively solve societal problems with community members.

Methodological Approaches

With this expanded theoretical framework in mind, what methods and approaches would lend themselves to using T-SEL practices as part of experiential education? Experiential learning and teaching may provide naturalistic opportunities for T-SEL to take place. In *service-learning*, there are deliberate efforts to gain lessons from community service, as opposed to typical volunteer work that does not have an explicit educational component (Jacoby, 1996). Carrying out such projects may provide real-life opportunities to foster SECs (e.g., planning, decision-making, teamwork, learning about oneself and others). Furthermore, some scholars have viewed service-learning as a tool for college students to learn about social justice (Ellerton et al., 2014; Seider, 2010).

Service-learning could be specifically designed as *project-based learning* (PBL) with groups of students (Larmer, 2020; Jagers et al., 2019), where activities center around an important real-world problem from the perspective of students. Central to PBL is collaborative inquiry that is sustained, active, and in-depth. In the process of PBL, students should have a sense of ownership, where they feel empowered to speak up and make decisions. Also, students and mentors jointly reflect on learning throughout their activities (e.g., what are they learning, how, and why), which may involve constructive criticism and revision of their approaches.

For instance, PBL could focus on the real-life problems related to students' own career readiness. Identity-conscious service-learning could play a particularly salient role in college persistence and career readiness (Dorner et al., 2017), by fostering SEL among post-secondary students (Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Museus, 2014; Pendakur, 2016). Pendakur postulates that college supports, such as career advice, provided in the context of identity-conscious service-learning

could be particularly effective for marginalized students. Indeed, disadvantaged students tend to benefit more from service-learning (IHEP, 2014). In other words, service-learning may lend itself to a potent mix of belonging and purpose, the latter of which has been acknowledged as a powerful driving force for young adults from both disadvantaged and advantaged backgrounds (DeLuca et al., 2016; Sumner et al., 2018).

Another approach that highlights the role of community members is *citizen science*, which refers to community members without scientific training working alongside scientists to address policy-relevant problems that they identify and investigate together (Cavalier & Kennedy, 2016; Phillips et al., 2014; Silka, 2017). An example of a citizen science project that addresses societal inequities was conducted by Dace and Mendenhall (2018). They worked with community members who helped identify possible health-related outcomes related to gun violence and then helped collect data capturing those outcomes. T-SEL may be at work here, where citizens and scientists co-create knowledge, collect data together, and collaboratively work toward reducing health disparities.

Lastly, as part of experiential learning and teaching, students might have the chance to learn how to conduct qualitative research, which is well-positioned to capture the voices of individuals from marginalized groups. An introduction to qualitative research could utilize *mindful ethnography*, which Orellana (2019) defines as fully immersing oneself in social contexts using skills accessible to both the public and researchers (e.g., observing what one thinks and feels, slowing down, questioning assumptions, accepting uncertainty). Orellana recently described the global community as being filled with ethnographers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where familiar experiences now appear strange to the everyday citizen. With a focus on being critical of assumptions and empowering the public with accessible forms of ethnographic methods (e.g., reflecting on one's surroundings), mindful ethnography might facilitate T-SEL.

Ethical Considerations

Despite the potential of the methodological approaches suggested above, the following issues should be considered to avoid reinforcing the very inequities that we seek to work against. Experiential learning and teaching that involves research methods such as ethnography should follow guidelines from institutional review boards. Additionally, service-learning can range from transactional to transformative, and strategies such as questioning assumptions can help

move us away from transactional experiences (Enos & Morton, 2003; Jagers et al., 2019; Orellana, 2019).

Implications for the Field of Experiential Education

Keeping in mind these considerations, implications for the field of experiential education can be drawn, where T-SECs may offer a framework for educators to reflect on the skills, abilities, and learning outcomes associated with experiential learning. In terms of curriculum and pedagogy, experiential learning and teaching could give college students an opportunity to acquire knowledge relevant to T-SECs, from disciplines such as community psychology and developmental psychology. Syllabi could include theory and research on critical consciousness, which refers to people from marginalized groups engaging in the critical analysis of social conditions and efforts to improve those conditions (Freire, 1996). It is noteworthy that critical consciousness has been linked with career development outcomes, particularly among under-resourced youth of color (e.g., Diemer et al., 2006).

A recent study by Rivas-Drake et al. (2021) offers examples of how instructors can put transformative SEL into practice. First, teachers in their study embedded a focus on students' lived experiences and identities in their lessons on SEL. Teachers found that students were eager to discuss current events that impacted their own communities. Discussions on how such events reflect social inequities could promote critical social awareness. A class assignment could ask students to identify current events that speak to SECs, social inequities, readings on critical consciousness, and their service-learning projects (e.g., local news stories on lower access to health care in marginalized communities during the COVID-19 pandemic). Students could then write about the linkages, present their reflections to the class, and discuss similarities and differences across presentations.

Second, the study conducted by Rivas-Drake et al. (2021) revealed that teachers used discussions about SEL to validate students' collective experiences with trauma, and Rivas-Drake et al. called for the sharing of these concerns as a chance to center on social justice. Syllabi might for instance, include readings from memoirs on the shared identity among immigrant youth. In class discussions of such readings, multiple students might share similar stories about the fear of family separation in the context of anti-immigrant political rhetoric. Furthermore, experiential learning programs could help students develop relevant service-learning projects (e.g.,

tutoring at elementary schools in local immigrant neighborhoods) and could work with offices dedicated to student wellness to offer support groups.

Third, teachers in the Rivas-Drake et al. (2021) study promoted students' civic engagement by acknowledging their potential to act as change agents on behalf of their communities. For example, teachers would do so by showing students YouTube videos of youth advocates. In the context of service-learning projects, college students could, for instance, work with non-profit organizations that advocate for the protection of voting rights, lead voter registration drives, and organize "get out the vote" initiatives for local, state, and national elections.

Importantly, the field of experiential education might consider how to foster the T-SECs of students, staff, faculty, and community members alike, where the development and well-being of multiple stakeholders are considered. Schonert-Reichl (2017) states that if our goal is to foster students' SECs, then we must consider educators' SECs as well. For example, under-represented minority faculty and staff in STEM-related departments might mentor under-represented college students majoring in STEM fields in the context of projects that aim to support the college readiness of Black and Latinx high school students who have an interest in STEM careers. Such efforts could both increase adolescents' knowledge about the college application process and promote critical self-awareness across different members of the broader university community. Through such projects, faculty, staff, and community members could gain a deeper understanding of their personal identities and shared sociocultural identities. In this way, experiential learning could help foster collective SEL and augment professional development programs that aim to increase a sense of belonging among under-represented faculty and staff.

Lastly, with an eye on T-SEL, the places in which experiential education occurs might expand in novel ways on and off campus (Keels, 2020). Universities could offer experiential learning opportunities that are part of events such as the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC)'s "Communiversities Think and Do Tanks," where UIUC and community members gathered to develop solutions to public health problems (e.g., what a local wellness center should offer to families (Dace & Mendenhall, 2018)). Furthermore, innovative spaces created for university STEM initiatives might be further extended with T-SEL in mind. The physical space of Purdue University's Wilmett Active Learning Center was

designed to stimulate different types of engaged learning. Also, the Ohio State University's STEAM Factory aims to increase the public's science literacy and to build university-community partnerships that reflect diversity and inclusivity, in part by offering events in public spaces. The STEAM Factory has fostered interdisciplinary collaboration and facilitated experiential learning (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine et al., 2018). Still, these efforts could be further developed with a focus on T-SEL, which might help ensure that all students yield similar benefits from such initiatives.

Discussion

In addition to describing practical implications, we also outline directions for future research. Existing studies have not extensively investigated the intersection of SEL, experiential learning, and social justice. Yet, there have been calls to focus on intra-personal and interpersonal competencies in efforts to promote students' success in college, especially among minoritized youth (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017). New research could study the integrated theoretical model; test linkages among experiential learning, T-SEL, and college persistence; and assess the effectiveness of the methods described here. For example, do minoritized students more highly rate CECE indicators if they engage in service-learning projects that address issues affecting their communities? Other possible future research questions include whether more T-SEL occurs and if collective efficacy is higher when students use identity-conscious service-learning projects, PBL, citizen science, or mindful ethnography to explore their career interests.

Despite the contributions of the current manuscript, it did not examine the role of students' intersectional identities nor various types of educational pathways. Also, there can be a slippery slope toward deficit models when focusing on students' individual competencies (Humphries & Iruka, 2017). Thus, it is vital that assets and asset building are part of discussions on T-SEL (Yosso, 2005). Additionally, adopting frameworks that encourage T-SEL may be viewed with skepticism as it can run counter to the status quo; therefore, "buy in" within universities and from community organizations is crucial.

In conclusion, experiential learning and teaching with T-SEL components may be uniquely positioned to help increase educational equity. Moreover, service-learning projects with a focus on T-SEL might yield benefits for multiple stakeholders (e.g.,

community members, staff, faculty). Importantly, such projects may help enhance intergroup relations and aid in decreasing prejudice, by providing opportunities for collaborative action among individuals who reflect diverse backgrounds. Finally, using the expanded theoretical model and methods discussed here might increase engagement among all students, especially among newer generations of young adults who are increasingly seeking ways to work toward social, economic, environmental, and racial justice. ■

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Democratic Community as a Public of Others: Combating Failed Citizenship in Refugees

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Fadi¹ was a surgeon for 15 years before he and his family were resettled from Syria to Chicago. Since arriving here, he's been able to take work as CNA in a nursing home and has been trying to figure out what of his education may be able to transfer so that he can enroll in nursing school. His wife, formerly a CPA, has had more success with gig economy jobs, but her choppy English has led to several failed interviews for full time work. "She's absolutely fluent in French, but alas we did not arrive there," (Haarman, 2020). His daughter has been adjusting well, partially because her English has been improving fast, but her failing grades in history courses (of a country she did not grow up in) meant she was not tracked into other AP courses and likely will not be eligible for some scholarships, as there is little time to turn her GPA around before she will graduate from highschool next year. Conversations with their neighbors have been awkward since they called the police to Fadi's apartment, claiming their Eid celebration was too loud. "They tell me I am so blessed to be here," Fadi shared with a smirk. "I tell them being alive is good and end the conversation."

Whether through difficulties in accessing equitable education, social stigma, or finding that their own skills and training are not recognized, many refugees find that although they are able to establish a stable life, they do not experience a deep sense of welcome or enthusiasm from the broader nation. Even in countries where there is robust educational support for their transition, many refugees are tracked into vocational studies, with only their children or the second generation reaching the same level of education and economic success as natives (Crul, 2019). It is unsurprising that some communities feel marginalized in their new places of residence despite often having more legal rights than they did before.

"A primary challenge is the political paradox of forming a community that is heterogeneous, yet is committed, connected, and has the capacity to work together across differences."

James Banks (2017) has come up with his own typology of experiences of citizenship and described how they manifest in the individual's civic participation and orientation to the nation. He believes that many refugees experience what he calls *failed citizenship*. In failed citizenship, citizens have the legal rights extended to all citizens, but are ambivalent towards the nation, do not internalize the nations' values, and tend to act only to support their own internal group. The failure in failed citizenship belongs to the larger democratic society for not integrating these individuals in a meaningful way. Banks (2019) believes that failed citizenship is often the result of experiences of discrimination, pressure to assimilate at the cost of cultural erasure, mediocre civic education, and lack of opportunities for meaningful civic action for the greater whole.

This paper will argue that resettled refugees' experience of failed citizenship in the United States is actually a bellwether for the challenges of democratic community for all citizens. A primary challenge is the political paradox of forming a community that is heterogeneous, yet is committed, connected, and has the capacity to work together across differences. This tension is often exacerbated by the poor civic education programs that teach stagnant models of citizenship and portray a false unity in civic narrative and experience in the classroom. The paper will then present Emmanuel Levinas' concept of the Other and John Dewey's conception of the public as ways to reframe our responsibility to and capacity to work with fellow citizens in diverse democratic communities while also not demanding assimilation or erasure. It will then recommend using experiential learning and Beista's 'community of those who have nothing in common' to reframe civic education in the classroom to combat failed citizenship in all citizens, whether native born or just arrived.

Failed Citizenship in the Democratic Community

Banks (2017) says that a minimum threshold definition of citizenship is one in which citizens have rights and privileges within a democratic state. However, these narrow parameters do not account for the complexity of multicultural democratic nations and thus offer an anemic standard of what civic identity entails. Because this minimal definition is often all that is promised and expected, Banks says many groups experience a failed citizenship - where their rights are established by law, but little is done to ensure access to those rights or engage a citizen beyond offering a legal status.

Failed citizenship is marked by feelings of distrust and exclusion. These individuals experience overt and covert structural exclusion, leading to a level of ambivalence towards the country (Banks, 2017). This often manifests in low participation in democratic functions, a belief that their actions may not make a difference, and a perception that the government is not actually invested in their flourishing. Failed citizens do not trust that they will be assisted by the nation state or outside communities in this goal and often their primary self-articulated identity is their ethnic, racial, or religious group. As a result, it is common for these groups to focus on their own care and often create their own spaces. Their identity as a member of the nation state is strongly secondary, if it is articulated or claimed at all.

Refugee communities often experience failed citizenship through the disconnect between the rights they supposedly gained upon resettlement and their current reality because of experiences of discrimination and harassment in employment, the public sphere, and in schools. Any access they are given often comes at the cost of the suppression of their own cultural heritage, language, values, or customs. Being an American citizen can often appear to mean no longer being who they are when they were resettled.

The role that schooling plays in the life of refugee communities becomes essential to the prevention of failed citizenship. John Dewey said that children have to experience democracy in order to internalize its values and habits and believed that education and schooling were one of the best opportunities. Banks (2017) believes human rights are also best experienced through schools.

In order for human rights ideals to be implemented in schools and to become meaningful for noncitizen children and youth, they must speak to and address the

children's and youth's experiences, personal identities, hopes, struggles, dreams, and possibilities. In other words, in order for students to internalize the concept of human rights, they must have experiences in school as well as in the larger society that validate them as human beings; affirm their ethnic, cultural, racial, and linguistic identities; and empower them as individuals in school and in the larger society (2019, p. 239)

Although most American schools offer some level of civic education curriculum aimed to engender a strong civic identity and active citizenship in students, most teachers adopt a single narrative of nationhood, focusing on traditional founding fathers (most of whom are white) and base level mechanics of governance. This promotes a simplistic civic national identity that minimizes the capacity and role for refugee communities within it (Banks, 2017). Refugee students and teachers both point out a massive disconnect between the content of civics textbooks and the current community's own realities. However, discussion of this tension rarely occurs, in part because of instructors' fear of causing conflict between students (Dryden-Peterson, 2019). Schools often exacerbate this tension by either placing students in classrooms in which they do not know the language while offering minimal support and guidance or separating them until they require requisite language skills. Both of these situations of "integration" involve a level of exclusion.

The Threat of Unity in Democratic Community

This failure of the larger polity to support the integration of new citizens presents a clear and present danger to democracy. Healthy democracies depend upon both the participation and trust of citizens. Refugees are the example par excellence of the paradox of democratic community. They have arrived to the United States having grown up elsewhere and potentially with a deep desire to return, even if that is not possible. They are negotiating sudden immersion into a new culture while also dealing with economic and social roadblocks to thriving. The easiest way to help them come to actively participate in civic life would be to encourage them to assimilate, but doing so would then strip them of the most valuable contributions they can make to the democratic process - their new and potentially differing perspectives. However, if they do not assimilate, they will find themselves alienated from full participation in society and likely withdraw from broader civic life, focusing primarily on those that share their own cultural framework.

Educators may find themselves at a loss as to how to create engaging educative experiences for refugee communities which help foster civic belonging and skills, but do not threaten to mute or suppress the essential differing perspectives that they bring. Additionally, many community-based learning courses that work with refugee communities focus only on their integration into American society, leaving the students who participate in them potentially complicit in fostering failed citizenship and advancing a singular narrative of what American culture should be.

Levinas' "Other" as Fellow Citizen

In the face of this potential impasse that threatens the success of both refugee and the broader democratic community, the work of Emmanuel Levinas provides a helpful conceptual framework for educators, especially those designing community-based learning courses. Levinas' concept of "the Other" and its ethical obligation presents the possibility of a form of community in which the distinctive ipseity of members is never compromised or subsumed - where difference is a necessity that binds (Zhao, 2016). For Levinas, the best description of human existence is being situated in relation to another person with whom one is in proximity—what he calls the Other. This framework becomes helpful as citizenship is marked by its relationality. To be a citizen is to have a formal relationship with a nation state and through the designation an implied relationship to every other citizen. A citizen is who they are because of relationships to other citizens and that relationship is not one of choice, but rather contingent to their very existence.

Beyond just recognition, Levinas believed that the self is constituted by this encounter. A person exists because of another and is themselves the Other to someone else. When encountering the Other, the person meets something that cannot be reduced to or filtered fully through their own experience. This encounter also sparks an ethical challenge (May, 1997). The Other helps solidify the identity of the individual because the person now has a more coherent understanding of how the categories and particularities they hold (in which the Other cannot be subsumed into) make them uniquely themselves. A native-born's encounter with a refugee makes them fully aware of their own identity as a native born citizen and they have the choice to recognize and value this difference or deny the refugee's very self. If the individual recognizes the Other as a unique being who cannot be subsumed and made to fit into pre-existing categories, they recognize what Levinas saw as sacred dignity (Zhao, 2016).

This distinction of self-hood for Levinas means that an accurate definition and understanding of the "self" includes the responsibility to and in the service of the other. That means this responsibility is a moral call, and not a manifestation of pity, altruism, or even rational decision making. Bettina Bergo said "Levinas' contribution was to see that responsibility and justice come not for me or my inborn moral sentiments, but from interruptions by the other, or better, from the relation between the other and me." (Bergo, 2008, p 69). Using this frame, community-based learning with refugees communities becomes not about an act of charity, but instead a response to a fellow citizen whose presence is key in helping one understand their own selfhood. Using Levinas' frame of the Other decenters the experience of the native-born citizen as the boilerplate for Americans, and instead encourages encounter and relationship which community-based learning well poised to facilitate.

Levinas' framework for a "community of singularities" helps build a foundation for just relationships between citizens, but it takes a more explicitly political turn when Levinas introduces the concept of the Third. The Third is Levinas's referent for the many people for whom a person is responsible - the other Others (Greenaway, 2016) Their existence introduces the problem of meeting simultaneous, equally important, and potentially conflicting demands - the very heart of democratic civic life.

It is important to clarify that while the presence of the Third complicates the dynamics between a person and the Other, they are not somehow less than or subsidiary (Fagan, 2009).² The Third is the reason that there is the capacity for real moral engagement and not the simple robotic following of pre-established law or guidelines for the treatment of the Other. The Third is another Other who compels a person into relationship. In this way, political life is unavoidable as the Third (all of the other citizens) is always present. In the relationship between United States citizens, it is not a matter of refugees "interrupting" the smooth functions of democratic exchange between already established citizens, making them a secondary concern to be dealt with because it is 'America First.' They are part of this democracy the moment they become proximate and encountered as fellow citizens.

Public Concerns and Public Work

Having used Levinas to establish that a community of singularities is not only possible, but imperative, the next challenge for the civic integration of refugee communities (and for democracy at

large) is how to begin the dialogues across these singularities and undertake common action for the broader community and not just their own groups.

When the relationship to the Other is recognized, citizens find themselves proximate to one another. Dewey (2012) would say that this leads to the discovery of common consequences. This forms informal associations of groups and when these groups become aware of the consequence of their own actions on others in society and vice versa, they can become compelled to action and advocacy. In these moments, for Dewey, they become a *public*. Refugee parents and native born parents both share the consequences of the quality of the local highschool. Their children may access different elements of the school, but the school's successful retention of qualified staff and support programs impact them both. This presents an opportunity for refugee families to work together with native born families to take civic action for a shared goal.

Deweyan publics do not require uniformity of identity, just shared consequences and opportunity for action. Dewey (2012) believed it was through this collective work as publics that local particulars become a critical window to supposed larger universals, nuancing viewpoints and further entangling the lives of neighbors. Groups of citizens who exercise the most power within a nation often believe their interests are shared by the entire polity and are therefore public interest. They typically see the interests of marginalized groups as atypical and irregular (Schlesinger, 1991).

According to Dewey, if the state was not serving the people, it is simply a structure of government and not truly democratic in nature. It has to be responsive to the democratic community, with citizens serving as active observers and critics of the state in order to help it maintain its connection to the public (Dewey, 2012). Dewey believed that the state, which contained a plurality of association within it, had to be capable and willing to grow and evolve as that plurality shifted. He said

Just as publics and states vary with conditions of time and place, so do the concrete functions which should be carried out by states. There is no antecedent universal proposition which can be laid down because of which the functions of a state should be limited or should be expanded. Their scope is something to be critically and experimentally determined (Dewey, 2012, p. 112).

A functioning democracy then needs to change as its citizens change. Dewey described it as, "a kind of net consequence of a vast multitude of responsive adjustments to a vast number of situations, no two of which were alike, but which tended to converge to a common outcome," (2012, p. 122). For Dewey, political forms were not inherently good or bad, but were instead the results of choices made by humans in response to their changing circumstances and relationships.

But what if a nation's democracy and understanding of citizenship did not shift along with demographic changes? For many experiencing failed citizenship, the nation either claims to believe in a value while its policies advocate something else entirely (e.g. the narrative of individuals being created equal while denying suffrage to women and people of color), or it does not reflect any of the values that new members of the community bring with them. The capacity for growth and change over time of a democracy in practice and value becomes essential. Banks said that "communities will find it difficult to develop strong commitments and identities with the nation-state if it does not reflect and incorporate important aspects of their ethnic and community cultures," (2019, p. 372). Citizens need to experience tangible civic equality and be recognized as having value by the state before they can make broader civic commitments.

Education as Midwife: Community-Based Civic Education for a Renewed (or Still Born) Democracy

At its best, civic education prefigures the sort of society it seeks to create. In the face of a changing democratic community, Westheimer (2019) believes that civic education in its current form leaves students unprepared, unenthused, and pushed to accept a historical narrative of the United States as the summation of possible civic life.³ This is a threat to democratic life not only because of the milquetoast and uncritical image of civic identity it presents, but because of the implications of a required assimilation in lieu of difference or disagreement. Dryden-Peterson (2017) also says that poor civic education can recreate insecurity both for teachers and students because it reveals ambiguous allegiances. Refugee students feel they are being pressured to accept a way of being a "good American" that they may not agree with or see any benefit in. In turn, teachers may worry that refugee students' disengagement or even disdain for the sometimes pseudo-jingoist content of civics classes will become a point of conflict between them and students who are native citizens.

As democracy shifts and grows with its people, civic education is failing to keep up. Banks' conception of failed citizenship revolves on the crucial insight that citizenship is more than just legal status. A citizen can legally have a right, but be impeded from using it (i.e. voter suppression). Banks (2005) acknowledges that while his research focused primarily on immigrants and people of color, the typology of failed citizenship may also fit some white people (especially the rural poor) and those groups discriminated against because of their gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion. If this stamp of failure seems to fit more citizens than not, a reevaluation is called for how citizenship is conceptualized and taught.

False unity is a trap in civics education that must be avoided if an authentic democratic community can be built. Zhao (2014) cautions that civic education strategies that focus on concepts like "inclusion" or "sense of belonging" often mask an overvaluing of sameness and reinforce for students the perception that differences are unwelcome, lead to conflict, and poison the learning environment. Banks (2017) actually believes that failed citizenship can be reduced by leaning into education about difference and explicitly names culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy and ethnic studies teaching as preferred methods to help students build skills around political efficacy and civic action. While refugee students are often the most obvious, Banks (2019) says that the majority of students in civic classrooms are actually in need of better recognition of the complex, multiple, and often conflicted identities they carry as they work to establish citizenship identities.

Citizens as a Community "Who Have Nothing In Common"

Faced with the reality that most classrooms may be full of students experiencing failed citizenship, civic educators should not attempt to build the false unity that has already been established as pedagogically ineffective and morally questionable because of the way it may push for the erasure of students' alterity. A viable alternative is Gert Biesta's (2004) form of the classroom called 'community of those who have nothing in common'. This community is the contrast to the idea of a rational community where the end goal is a common discourse and individual perspectives are shifted to fit universal categories. The rational community makes the community members rational agents and renders their particularity utterly inessential (Biesta, 2004). Most educational settings often seek (intentionally or not) to create

rational communities so that essential serious information may be conveyed and acquired efficiently.

Alternatively, the 'community of those who have nothing in common' is a space where everyone is a stranger to each other and individuals' particularity (like that of Levinas' Other) are irreducible. Biesta (2004) believes it is both a space of radical ethical encounter and the environment that teachers should seek to create in the classroom. In this space, everyone speaks with their own voice with the emphasis first on dialogue and listening rather than the identification and acquisition of truth. Refugees, native born students, and teachers all talk about civic identity in their own voice using their own frames and perspectives. It shifts the model of learning away from that of the rational community - the passive acquisition of a recognized and universal truth - to something rooted in relationality and particularity. Learning in the 'community of those who have nothing in common' is the experience of *responding* to essential questions with one's particular voice and listening to others. Framed this way, a student does not learn to be a citizen by memorizing the branches of government or the order of rights in the first amendment. They learn when they respond to the unfamiliar and unique narratives the Other brings into the classroom. Biesta (2004) cautions educators that this will disrupt the previous placid operation of the rational community in their classrooms, but he believes it is the beginning of something more.

Citizens are bound to each other as much as they are bound to the place they reside. Refugees with failed citizenship feel a disconnect from the values and larger project of democracy in the United States because the rest of the nation has not sought them out as interlocutors. Zhao (2014) says that democracy ceases to be a field of competition, with groups strategically furthering their own purposes at the cost of others, only when its citizens understand it to be an ethical space where communication on issues of common concern happens. Spaces where citizens can speak freely, raise questions, advocate for solutions to problems *and do so in their own cultural voice* must exist. They must be present and maintained in schools, the great forge of democratic life and proximity, through an experiential and community-based curriculum that is unafraid of difference and sees that the presence of refugees (and anyone else experiencing failed citizenship) is not an interruption. A civic education that combats failed citizenship must encounter the Other with hospitality, curiosity, and a willingness to take the time to let them know this place is theirs too. ■

Notes

1. Fadi is a pseudonym.
2. Fagan says "It is clear that the Third does not enter or interrupt some prior relationship of perfect responsibility, in the sense of the 'real world' getting in the way of [the] ideas of responsibility," (2009, p. 10).
3. "The result for schoolchildren has been a mostly watered-down notion of civics that emphasizes good character and blind patriotism over critical thinking and engaging with multiple perspectives." (Westheimer, 2019, p. 12).

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Reimagining Scripts for Human and Environmental Justice in Experiential Learning

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Background

In this article, we¹ discuss a co-taught course on social and environmental justice in Pakwach, Uganda. One of the goals of the course was to design a learning framework that situated students as agents of change. We aimed to explicitly link alternative course structures, pedagogy, and student agency with social and environmental justice outcomes. We thought of our pedagogical work as an invitation to disrupt the ways in which students traditionally had gone about their learning, either through structures we suggested, or through structures they developed on their own. Our task was to remain open to and supportive of alternative approaches and forms of engagement that emerged through their project collaborations. This mindset afforded students the opportunity to choose the sites and modes of their connection with the course projects, to exercise agency in determining where and how their learning would occur, while remaining responsible to their groups and to their collaboratively defined goals regarding the broader environmental justice project.

In hindsight, we intentionally destabilized traditional classroom scripts—dominant patterns and interactions that undermine student agency in classrooms—to make way for something new—to rewrite and/or replace those scripts. Gutierrez, Rymes, and Larson (1995) explain that disrupting scripts can foster an “unscripted third space,” where deeper communication and learning opportunities occur (p. 465).² Retrospectively, we came to understand this disruptive approach as an act of *descripting*.

This case illustrates how descripting—in our case, fostering students’ agency—helped us to shift from a focus on effective instruction and grades to a focus on student agency and varied kinds of learning and on authentic assessment. In what fol-

lows, we contextualize our approaches in the literature of alternative pedagogies and examine student learning as articulated in their reflective writing. The analysis and discussion ultimately provide a conceptual framework we refer to as GORP (Gravity, Ownership, Relationships, and Place/Space) from which similarly interested instructors might benefit.

Problem Statement and Questions

Effective orientation to justice requires the capacity to step away from positions of privilege and make space for other voices and perspectives. As co-developers of the course, we believed a similar transformation of classroom power dynamics—what we now understand as an equity- and justice-centered approach³—might change the way students engaged with the challenges of conservation, as well as the challenges of claiming agency in the classroom and making tangible contributions to social justice issues, leading us to these questions:

1. What classroom dynamics and circumstances model, enact, and encourage equity-centered social justice engagement?
2. What classroom dynamics and circumstances support student engagement in environmental justice work?

We worked toward approaches that would open opportunities for students to function in the classroom and in the world that they had not thought available to them.

Theoretical Framework and Literature on Pedagogical Approaches

We recognized that an interrogation of classroom scripts had to begin with our own pedagogical practices and assumptions. Gutierrez, Rymes, and Larson

(1995) identified the ways in which, regardless of their training or background, instructors typically teach according to their cultural values and professional experiences. In such teaching and learning relationships, instructors deliver knowledge, and students who demonstrate (through summative and formative assessments) that they've retained or applied knowledge receive a high course grade. Descripting is tied to the concept of third space, a post-colonial theory with a rich theoretical history (Bhabha,2004; Soja,1996; hooks, 2008). Applying the concept to classrooms, Gutierrez, Rymes, & Larson (1995) explain "It is in this unscripted third space that student and teacher cultural interests, or internal dialogizations, become available to each other, where actual cross-cultural communication is possible" (p. 465). Thus, third space allows for what Soja (1996) terms "radical openness," or what we interpret as an openness toward co-created frameworks for learning that are both emergent and transformative, and which produce patterns that are repeatable in other institutional contexts. We saw justice-oriented practices as democratizing practices -- they required that we undid the hierarchies that dictated interaction, both in society and in classrooms. Furthermore, there are indications that radical openness in the classroom can lead to patterns of open interaction in other contexts (Hyttén, 2017).

The syllabus. As the course instructors began creating a syllabus, we recognized that our own scripts (i.e., disciplinary, training, assessment techniques, values) had the potential to surface in syllabus policies, procedures, and design (for a robust discussion of syllabus design and equity, see Luke, Woods, & Weir, 2013). Descripting the syllabus meant resisting detailed descriptions of course activities and outcomes. We defined these only generally, creating space for the role of students as co-creators. While each of the faculty responded differently to this approach, it pushed us toward radically reimagining course dynamics and outcomes throughout the semester.

Pedagogical patterns. Combined with our attempts at reimagining, we aligned with familiar aspects of experiential learning. We adopted a mind-set open both to using a method we knew could

be transformative and to actively descripting our individual conceptualizations of how experiential education worked. For example, we aligned with John Dewey's (1986) concept of a concrete learning experience followed by a period of reflection to create learning moments for individuals. Additionally, Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning informed learning patterns. Yet we refocused these approaches to foster learners' agency and support collaborative project creation processes, simultaneously descripting and co-creating a shared script would lead to desired socioemotional, affective, and interpersonal outcomes (Heinrich & Green, 2020).

Assessment. To further facilitate descripting, faculty assessed learning by modifying a process of learning documentation used in early childhood education. The model found in Reggio Emilia (see Edwards, Gandini, and Forman, 2011) centers an emergent experiential curriculum, where student interest drives content delivery, and assessment is based on teachers' documentation of learning. The teacher then displays back to the learner what the learner did and how, providing a metacognitive/ experiential lens. In the course, evaluation of learning was conducted through instructor observations about teamwork, content delivery, and event management. We shifted from instructor-defined learning goals toward team-defined projects (Maki, 2012). Formative assessment for student improvement during the course included insights and feedback on collaboration, work products, and reflective writing.

Methodological Approach

We collected student interaction and activity notes, student reflections, and course documents (i.e., the syllabus, schedule, agendas presented in class, & course products) to track how students responded to the scripts presented to them, and how they managed to shift those scripts toward their own goals, as well as how instructors themselves adapted to student learning (Table 1). In this way we modeled the justice orientation of the classroom (Rend'on , 2009). As we drew on postcolonial frameworks in planning and implementation, we understood the need to use reflexive research approaches

Table 1: Data Types

DATA TYPE	AMOUNT	FREQUENCY
Participant Observations	14/16 weeks over semester	Bi-weekly
Course Documents	Syllabus, assignments/readings, planning documents	Used throughout course
Student Reflections	87 artifacts/114 possible (76%)	Submitted bi-weekly
Anonymous Midterm Student Feedback	16/19 students submitted feedback (84%)	Submitted at mid-term

(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). To understand the outcomes and potential of this experimental course, we interrogated the ways in which scripts and learning were reciprocally reoriented through interactions in the classroom, reflection, and feedback.

Analytical Methods

This study has been determined to be exempt under 45 CFR 46.104(d) 1 by the IRB at Michigan State University. We began by hand coding all reflection data (87 artifacts out of 114 possible, 76% submission rate) using open coding thematic analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The average length of reflections was 720 words. Final reflections averaged 2000 words. To create codes, we divided the reflections in half, read them through once, and highlighted emergent themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). We discussed our first round of coding, then scanned for agreement and each analyzed the artifacts we had not previously analyzed. Finally, we each reread all the artifacts, then discussed salient themes and clusters across the data.

Results

Through this analysis, we identified four pedagogy-related themes evinced in students’ reflections – ‘Gravity’, ‘Ownership’, ‘Relationship’, and ‘Place’, which we call the ‘GORP’ framework – described in Table 2.

Gravity

In this class, students defined goals to address social and environmental justice in Pakwach, Uganda. In their reflections, 17/19 students noted the gravity--real-world significance leading to student investment-- of this problem as central to their learning

[T]his course...emphasizes capacity building both in Pakwach and here on campus. We took the skills and abilities that we already possessed and put them to use in a new learning environment. The realities of this course and the livelihoods that depended on us succeeding has ingrained those lessons into my brain.
-Student R.

At the same time, the focus on the external project pushed students beyond a grade/evaluation reward structure, and some students were highly cognizant about this approach.

[T]he work that we do doesn’t just end with the final exam, but extends beyond the classroom into the real world where we can make an impact, solve problems, and change society for the better.
- Student G.

The external reality of needs in Packwach provided ways for students to imagine possibilities beyond what is traditionally planned in classrooms. Built on an ungraded engagement with the issues it introduced, Gravity was actualized by the de-scripted/re-scripted student-defined projects and individual students’ responsibilities to the success of this social and environmental justice project.

Ownership

15/19 reflections referred to the ways students exercised ownership individually, in teams, and as a classroom community in conversation with the larger conservation project community. Ownership emerged when students designed their own approaches to the shared problem and then developed delivery and accountability patterns.

My team was in charge of planning two events...the Mordecai Ogada book event and the Spring Soiree. For these events, we split up to conquer tasks. The [book] event was student-run aside from presentations by faculty and Dr. Ogada himself. I think this ownership of the project continued to show until the end of the semester.
- Student H.

[T]he class was set up as groups of teams that come up with their own goals and are self-driven. Having an environment like that I think makes people uncomfortable, and maybe some have trouble conceiving the thought of not being strictly directed and given the freedom to pursue ideas.
- Student A.

Table 2: GORP Framework

THEME	DESCRIPTION
Gravity	Indicates the real-world significance of the course’s central theme or focus (human and wildlife sustainability through redefined conservation approaches, in this case), but also to the shifted model of assessment, away from grades and toward formative feedback on student-defined projects, to increase students’ legitimate investment.
Ownership	(Setting expectations for) Student responsibility to define their own projects and goals, to assess their own successes and challenges within those frameworks, and to refine or redefine their next projects and goals in response.
Relationship	Refers to the effect of describing traditional classroom hierarchies, which opens a range of peer-to-peer and student-to-instructor interactions -- ones marked by mutual respect, recognition of pertinent competencies, and trust.
Place	Draws attention to the real-world sites of the course, including Uganda, the public book discussion event, and the soiree, and to the space of the classroom, which was structured for flexible, fluid, student-driven interactions.

The final event was initially imagined as a gallery show, but that was not feasible. Students reimagined the idea and produced a soiree. The concrete planning needs of the event added some clarity to the work of the students.

[T]he Soiree was very powerful and thought provoking. From the duo student speeches, to seeing Emmanuel perform, and the unveiling of the giraffe, the whole evening was just very inspiring and unforgettable. This class teaches you invaluable hands-on skills that [are] hard to be taught in a regular textbook pencil paper environment.
- Student S.

Relationships

We observed students actively engaged in varied and dynamic learning relationships when overt power differentials were modified in this course. Such an approach, whereby dominant power relationships are disrupted in the interest of increasing inclusive participation, can lead to social justice outcomes.

15/19 students noted how their different skills emerged through collaborative relationships with peers and instructors. Instructors developed coaching-centered relationships with students to encourage them to take the lead in production. Trust between students and faculty helped create a novel learning experience. Student V. commented:

The interaction of professors with students and the passion for all the work they had done to make it happen felt authentic." At the same time, Student H. noted "Our first challenge was learning how to trust each other and understand how to best work together.

Relationships naturally have some vulnerability and sharing, but group work in courses does not usually result in solutions to frustrating moments.

For *Value Chain* [workgroup] in particular, each faculty member wanted something different from us. We were stressed from the attempt of trying to please everyone until our coach instructed us to step back and decide what realistically we as a team were capable of completing in one semester.
-Student N.

Feedback, not authority, influenced decisions of teams to move forward with work, and how work would be completed.

Whenever we were stuck on a problem, we always had coaches to help us out and give us their professional opinion, but in a much more intimate setting. [O]ur

professors weren't just a professor, they were there as supporters and mentors as well.
- Student L.

Place and Space

Place and space emerged as an important component of learning for 13/19 students in this course, creating space and models for the cognitive flexibility needed to execute a complex project. Both aspects of Place/Space were oriented toward social justice, and the Pakwach project was also linked to environmental justice.

Space of the project and embedded techniques are both familiar and disorienting. A student in the course reported (anonymously):

I still don't understand the meaning of the word scrum, but I do like reporting out. It helps to know what other teams are working on so that my team can figure out what our next steps should be.

Intellectual space in the classroom was also networked through organized relationships. In short, the project extended the classroom space to the Snares to Wares initiative.

This sprint has been different from the previous ones due to the increased involvement of entities outside the Snares to Wares course. I really want to plan the space at the Broad [Museum] (the location for Soiree) to emulate the message of the initiative.
- Student S.

Another student offered their perspective (anonymously) on the connection to Uganda:

The fact that this initiative focuses on creating jobs for villages in Uganda to thrive and proliferate gets me very excited. This is genuinely productive work and designing a helping hand is always something to be insanely excited about.

The classroom modeled flexible learning in a very visible way. Students accepted the problem(s) and claimed the space as 'theirs'. At the same time, instructors aimed to invite participation, introduce constraints, and encourage agency -- aspects of the radical openness offered by the course structure (Soja, 1996). Students responded by collaborating among and between teams to create and implement solutions.

Discussion

Pedagogical Frameworks Toward Justice Orientation

In initiating paths toward justice-oriented teaching

this course created circumstances and opportunities for both instructors and students to descript -- to step away from traditional hierarchies and explore new roles and forms of classroom interaction -- modeling both social justice and democratization-oriented pedagogies (Soja, 1996). Our analyses of student engagement, learning, and metacognition led us to identify student-generated counterscripts.

Learning in a GORP classroom looked different than in a traditional classroom, and it emerged in unexpected forms, in part due to the topic, pedagogies, and assessment approach (gravity). For example, when students set priorities for work (ownership), the pace of work also changed. Students, in turn, needed 'just-in-time' feedback (relationship) on the artifacts they were developing. We also found instructors needed to be prepared to recognize, acknowledge, and pivot as students requested specific kinds of feedback to support individual and team goals.

Because the teacher-centered classroom is a part of the traditional script, with controls over the forms of relationship, movement, and interaction, reconfiguring the learning space was an approach to de-scripting this learning space. GORP's idea of 'place' involves real-world interactions, projects, and outcomes, while relying on the classroom space itself. We leveraged lessons on place-based learning in both physical and virtual environments (Lansiquot & MacDonald, 2018).

The community of Pakwach, Uganda provided a specific location as the object of the course, reinforcing the gravity.⁴ The campus location in which the course was offered—a non-standard, flexible design space, with no fixed 'front'—added to the strength of place-based learning for exploring ethics with interdisciplinary approaches (Goralnik et al., 2012). GORP scripts benefitted from a space that could accommodate a range of learning behaviors. As they introduced the course, the instructors signaled the physical space and experience would be different from a traditional front-facing classroom, thereby modeling and enabling *descripted* interactions.⁵ While lectures⁶ and knowledge sharing took place early on, the course later pivoted to iterative design sprints. Students, in turn, exercised agency and reconfigured the furniture toward redefined modes of learning and interaction—ones that would deepen the 'gravity' of the course, transform 'relationships,'⁷ and create new opportunities for 'ownership' of course projects and outcomes.⁸

Assessment as Social Justice

To effectively expand opportunities for student agency, instructors must move beyond merely stepping away from traditional scripts, but also learn to match assessment and feedback methods to student outcomes and transformative learning (Nilson, 2015). A GORP script requires assessment work to be responsive to student strategies and the work they prioritize for that day—evidence of both 'gravity' and 'ownership'. With each day in the course functioning differently, instructors must focus on supporting emergent processes, and defining ways of assessing these dynamic, 'de-scripted' interactions.⁹ Responsive assessment which honors the individual and group contributions, in turn, serves as a model for students who are learning how to be engaged social justice actors.

Students' series of reflective documents led to insights on student learning. Initial reflections created artifacts for instructors to see metacognitive development. From initial artifacts, instructors responded by acknowledging and displaying student learning, then encouraging a pivot toward new/emergent topics and content. By engaging in responsive praxis, students

"Although accountability remains important, what students are accountable for is what actually changed."

drove opportunities for emergent learning and asked for feedback, which in turn required new assessment strategies. Students' reflective artifacts strongly suggested that, had instructors not yielded overt control over content and outcomes, students would not have exerted as much 'ownership' over the outcomes of the work or embraced the 'gravity' of the course experience. Their reflections thus encouraged instructors to recognize different indicators of success, as when gravity and place served to reinforce student agency in making change and when ownership and relationships were mutually supportive of trust in new respective roles. When students took initiative, asked new questions, and related to instructors as consultants in co-creation rather than sole knowledge experts, they actively redefined relationships and ownership within teams and with instructors.

Although accountability remains important, what students are accountable for is what actually changed. Instructors needed to develop the kinds of work and assessment processes that would document the kinds of learning they were observing, which we now see as akin to specifications grading practices (Nilson, 2015). Instructors and students alike shifted their perspectives, and some evidence indicates shifts in their identities as learners and teachers. Shifts were built upon the different kinds of emergent relation-

ships in these interactions. As students responded to the pull of the course's 'gravity' and accepted 'ownership' of projects, they also reconceptualized relationships with support of instructors, to which they were also accountable. By being seen as change agents, students learned to see the deep needs of their communities and stakeholders. GORP assessment was holistic and recognized interdisciplinary learning outcomes. In our case, we learned to evaluate how individual students were accountable to their teams, to team-defined goals, and external stakeholders. We think these are universal for the GORP approach.

Implications for Experiential Learning

GORP, a remixed script linking together the themes of Gravity, Ownership, Relationship, and Place (space), can also be understood as an integrated conceptual framework for approaching course design and student learning focused on students' agency and justice outcomes. We believe it can support social and environmental justice pedagogies in a variety of institutional contexts. However, we caution against relying on GORP concepts alone. To work with GORP in different institutional contexts, we believe it is helpful to understand these concepts as a series of intellectual moves that, when pursued as a holistic pedagogy, contribute to more inclusive and equitable learning spaces.

As these themes suggest, a GORP script is open, process-oriented, and fluid, requiring attention to emergent learning of both instructor(s) and students. GORP has not, however, been deployed in a way that would reveal how well students from under-represented backgrounds in higher education react to de-scripting or rescripting approaches. From the standpoint of student success, there is both potential and risk in such approaches. Paradoxically, students already disadvantaged in a higher education context, such as first-generation students, might experience an intensified sense of dislocation when traditional scripts are replaced with a more student-driven approach, even as these new approaches aim to flatten damaging and alienating power dynamics in the classroom. For a similar model to work in other contexts, it is imperative for planners to design conducive environments with conditions for student ownership and critical emergent learning (Hytten, 2017) while planning time to assess for learning by close observation and through coaching, conversations, and more traditional written feedback.

Conclusion

The GORP framework suggests that when traditional classroom structures are actively descripted, students

may take up this invitation to engage, and instructors can respond by assessing learning in a responsive way, and help students see what they are learning. We must also consider the broader implications of GORP in course design and assessment in a time of needed attention to justice-focused diversity, equity, inclusion, and/or decolonization in higher education. In attempting to engage in described learning interactions or at least to create different scripts, students and instructors can become conscious of new approaches to social justice in the classroom, and student reflections yield evidence of change.¹⁰ We believe GORP has the potential to guide new curricular structures (along with content changes) that will contribute effectively to creating more inclusive, equitable course experiences and more sustainable engagement with social and environmental challenges. ■

Notes

1. "We" is a group of 4 instructors and 5 non-instructor course advisors. The 5 course advisors were based in MSU's Hub for Innovation in Learning and Technology.
2. On the 'thirdspace approach' to learning see Bhabha (1994); hooks (2008); & Soja (1996).
3. For more reading on equity- and justice-centered approaches, see Baker-Bell (2020); Venet (2021).
4. We see the shift in gravity -- the intrinsic pull on students' attention away from grades and toward concern for the larger project -- as related to McCune et al. (2021), concerning teaching in interdisciplinary contexts, and to Goralnik et al. (2015), who address similar ideas in community-based projects.
5. Our conceptions of learning-oriented relationships stem from a body of student development and learning theory, including cognitive development (Josselson, 1996), social responsibility (Sanford, 1967), identity development (Torres, Jones, & Renn 2009), and lifespan development (Kegan, 1994).
6. Some instructors may struggle with adapting teaching behaviors for interdisciplinary content and/or team instruction. Colleges and universities want students to learn in this manner, but departments often do not prepare instructors (or students) or reward these kinds of group teaching efforts (Heinrich et al., 2021). Creating a repeatable process meant we also began to consider ours and our students' disciplinary identities, needs and rewards.
7. Patton et al. (2016) argue that integrated experiences linked through relationships and the individual's identity can lead to learning and growth. See also (Engström & Sannino, 2012), who understand relation-

ships through process theory, where learning follows information and requires learners to evaluate trusted teachers.

8. On ownership, see Brookhart, Moss and Long (2009) who include ownership as an aspect of learning (p. 52); see also descriptions of self-authorship of learning journeys in Barber, King, and Baxter Magolda (2013).

9. With the term 'de-scripted', we gesture toward the decolonizing theories that have emerged from 'third space' conceptual frameworks, and the unstable sign of deconstruction theory, as defined by Jacques Derrida.

10. Here we are making connections to the shift Django Paris (2012) discusses that we must move from hybridity as a form of inclusion, to approaches that center the sustaining of culture and access to other cultures as an essential orientation of justice focused education.

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Justice Isn't One-Size-Fits-All: Working toward Justice in Service-Learning Courses

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I ntroduction

Experiential Liberatory Education

The field of experiential education (EE) makes clear the role that experience has on enhancing student learning (Kolb, 1984). Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory presents a cycle through which students have an experience, reflect on their observations, conceptualize their reflections into new knowledge, and then apply this new knowledge in future experiences. Further, experiential education is built from social cognitive learning theory. This adult learning theory considers the ways in which learners are situated in social contexts and how environments and context influence their learning (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). In the case of experiential education, this means that students are developing their own learning through what they witness and experience in the world. When this type of learning intersects with social justice education, or liberatory education, new types of student outcomes may arise; specifically, those contributing to the development of social and critical consciousness. Liberatory education is centered around encouraging individuals to engage in the world in an inclusive, culturally-responsive way; it "prioritizes human potential and promise" (Randall, 2018, para. 14).

Service-Learning is a teaching tool that enhances both student learning outcomes and contributes to community goals (Bandy, 2011). This pedagogical approach is a form of experiential learning, and when done through a critical lens it seeks to redistribute power and work to understand the intersectional identities of faculty, students, community partners, and community members (Mitchell, 2008). Mitchell (2008) shares that critical service-learning must propel students to see themselves as "agents of social change and use

the experience of service to address and respond to injustice in communities" (p. 51). In order to do this, stakeholders in the community-based learning (faculty members, students, community partners) must understand the role their identities play and challenge the status quo. This understanding can be developed through integrating liberatory educational practices, such as those posited by Friere (1970), Kendi (2019), hooks (1994), and Love (2019). Freire (1970) states that building a consciousness of one's surrounding social conditions is important to understanding the

systems of inequality that create injustices. Kendi's (2019) approach to antiracism, bell hooks' teaching to transgress (1994), and Bettina Love's (2019) abolitionist teaching all call on liberatory education as a way by which to see possibility and make change through reflection, experience, and

practice. Love (2019) asks educators to call in histories of violence and oppression and then center "educational survival tactics" (p. 70) to support student success and justice-focused initiatives or movements.

To understand how these liberatory education practices contribute to student learning and development, we utilize our institution's Self-Authoring Integrated Learning (SAIL) framework. This framework, developed by Ambrose et al. (2017) utilized learner science, student development theory, and design thinking to create a model that demonstrates the learning that happens within various contexts (e.g. classrooms, volunteer activities, work experiences, and the community). The following analysis, as it explores the impacts of rooting community-engagement activities in an explicit justice theory, tracked the skills within the social consciousness and commitment dimension. This dimension captures how "learners develop the confidence, skills, and values to effectively recognize the needs of individuals, communities, and societies

"Transformative justice sees the opportunity for healing not just for a victim, but as a pathway toward creating broader community change."

as well as make a commitment to constructively engage in social action (p. 2)” (Talger et al., 2017). The specific skills in this dimension are: advocacy, civic-mindedness, conflict resolution, inclusivity, networking, and systems thinking (SAIL at Northeastern, n.d.). The data analyzed in the following sections of this piece are pulled from student evaluations which reflect the SAIL framework’s skills, dimensions, and foundational masteries (Talgier et al., 2017).

The skills and competencies from the SAIL framework are meant as a guide for where and how to measure learner social and critical consciousness development. This can begin through integrating the liberatory educational practices described above, yet the specific connection between these practices and social, racial, and environmental justice in experiential education is not as evident. As a subfield of EE, Service-Learning and Community Engagement (SLCE) exists at the intersection of social justice education and experience, yet there is not a shared framing or articulation of what social justice within SLCE means. The phrase “social justice” alone is used broadly across the field, yet there is no shared definition. Garvin et al. (2019) attempt to make sense of how this phrase is used across the field, stating that:

In whatever ways we understand and operationalize social justice, the term carries weight, both intellectually and emotionally. It is central to perennial tensions related to how to undertake SLCE: whether to focus attention on the short term or the long term, on personal chance or systems change. (p. 183)

Given all of this, an exploration of how social justice manifests in SLCE must interrogate not just the phrase itself, but the various theories of justice that inform justice-oriented work, such as that of experiential education.

Theories of Justice

Beyond the field of experiential education, justice comes in many forms and has multiple theoretical and philosophical underpinnings, yet it is often presented in monolithic ways. The Merriam-Webster definition of justice is:

The maintenance or administration of what is just, especially by the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishments; the establishment or determination of rights according to the rules of law or equity; the quality of being just, impartial, or fair. (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)

This overarching, commonplace definition aligns with distributive justice, which John Rawls (1971) calls

“justice as fairness” and in which justice is equality for all. While distributive justice recognizes the fairness of personal liberty in so far as it is compatible with the liberties of others, procedural justice is a theory by which systems and laws are enforced in society (Yale Law School, n.d.). The criteria of procedural justice are subject to a particular administration, enforced by law and judges. These two theories of justice, distributive and procedural, are most common in the United States when using the word justice, yet the use of these theories of justice are limited in some contexts, situations, and fields. When considering how education around social, environmental, and racial justice is achieved through experiential education, it is not enough to just consider the theories of distributive and procedural, we must also consider the role of productive, restorative, and transformative justice as well.

Productive justice is “aimed at creating a system within which we focus on causes rather than symptoms. Emphasizes participation in the decisions through which [environmental] burdens are produced” (Berkey, 2017. p 11). Restorative justice seeks to not only make right a system, or align with laws, but rather considers the hurt, need, and responsibility of victim and offender. Johnstone and Van Ness (2007), examine how restorative justice can be an alternative to procedural or punitive justices. According to this, restorative justice is:

not simply a new programme or a new technique but something much more ambitious: a fundamental change in our manner of viewing and responding to criminal acts and associated forms of troublesome behaviour and of relating to both those who commit such acts and those affected by them. (p. 5)

Transformative justice takes this further to scale, exploring the role and impacts of a broader community within a particular situation or environment. Morris (2000) calls upon Quaker philosophies of healing and forgiveness to build upon restorative justice and develop stories of transformative justice. Transformative justice sees the opportunity for healing not just for a victim, but as a pathway toward creating broader community change.

What Do We Mean in Our Context When We Talk about Justice (and Why)?

As we explored the intersections of experiential education and theories of justice, we identified a clear gap in explicit guidance on how to design EE experiences that foster a social justice mindset. In our context of supporting service-learning courses that contribute to communities and build student

social consciousness, this gap informs the questions we undertake here about how or why (or even if) a service-learning course could work toward justice. In doing so, we propose that as a field (and certainly at our own institution) we move beyond simply a critique of how these opportunities miss the mark to how or whether a facilitator's/educator's orientation toward justice can influence learners and communities alike.

Toward this end, in the sections that follow we consider the ways in which justice is situated (or not) in a set of selected service-learning courses (selected with the criteria of an intended first- or second-year student audience). The questions guiding this exploration are:

- What are the different philosophical foundations of social, racial, and environmental justice and how might those manifest in different approaches/orientations to experiential learning?
- As a form of experiential learning, does service-learning increase student social consciousness, and how can/does that in turn orient students toward broader social, racial, and environmental justice? If so, how?
- What beyond the content of a service-learning course contributes to increased student social consciousness?
- Is there an observable difference in evidenced or self-reported development of student social consciousness when comparing students in different service-learning courses as it pertains to the extent to which justice is explicitly stated as a learning outcome, as well as what opportunities are present to make linkages between course content, experiential learning, and social justice?
- Does it matter what the approach/underlying philosophy of justice is? Does that have an impact on the development of social consciousness and commitment among students?
- If yes, what are the key pedagogical interventions occurring in order to increase student social consciousness? If not, what are the implications for teaching practice?

These questions are examined here through the lens of service-learning courses at Northeastern University, which is a private, urban university that

has a specific focus on experiential education. Service-Learning is a recognized form of experiential education at the institution and therefore is supported by the Community-Engaged Teaching and Research team, which recently shifted structurally to the Office of the Chancellor (it previously reported through City and Community Engagement). The communities in which Northeastern's Boston campus is located are largely communities of color with rich histories and cultures that often differ from those of students, faculty, and staff at the university, particularly as the university's profile has shifted significantly in the past decade. These dynamics mean that foundational support and infrastructure are needed to ensure that the needs of community partners are met and that the growth potential of experiential education is actualized for students- as well as a better understanding of what inputs lead to the social consciousness and commitment outputs identified as imperative and central to student learning.

How Our Theoretical Framework Informs Our Methodological Approach

Given our guiding questions and context, our goal for this paper is to compare seven different service-learning sections of first- and second-year courses to determine if there is an observable difference in the development of student social consciousness and commitment as it pertains to the extent to which justice is explicitly stated as a learning outcome, as well as what opportunities are present that make linkages between course content, experiential learning, and social justice through course activities and reflection.

We selected courses for this analysis that were offered within the same semester (Spring 2021) and all of which were aimed at first- and second-year students (were listed as 1000- and 2000-level courses). Additionally, we selected lower-level courses to compare 'like to like' in some ways, knowing that it would also provide important diversity of perspective on how these topics are realized in multiple disciplinary areas.

Given that this is a thought-praxis piece, what we present here is only loosely guided by best practices within qualitative content analysis. We used this as a framework to guide our inquiry and reflection on our key questions and goals. In content analysis, one selects content, defines units of meaning for observable evidence within that content, codes the content-as-data, and analyzes the results of this coding. As illustrated in our process below, we followed this approach in spirit by selecting our content and creating a system by which to analyze and understand

it, also often summarized as preparation, organizing, and reporting (Elo, S. & Kyngäs, H., 2008). Utilizing inductive content analysis due to a lack of existing theory building the connections we wished to explore, we sought to move from the specifics within certain courses associated with service-learning at our institution to develop a sense of general patterns and relationships between them (Chinn & Kramer, 1999). Further, because we were exploring the relationships between concepts, we used the principles and practices associated with relational analysis, wherein:

Relational analysis begins like conceptual analysis, where a concept is chosen for examination. However, the analysis involves exploring the relationships between concepts. Individual concepts are viewed as having no inherent meaning and rather the meaning is a product of the relationships among concepts (Content Analysis, 2021).

As described previously, our Community-Engaged Teaching & Research team regularly collects much information about each of the service-learning courses we support. The program material reviewed for this piece is covered by our Institutional Review Board certificate for course materials collected on behalf of the program. Within each of these data sources, we sought unique contributions they may make to our understanding of the relationship between the theory of justice with which the course was aligned, the level to which this was transparently communicated with the students, and the students' own self-reported and

documented understanding of their growth around social consciousness and commitment. Table 1 lays out each data source and what we evaluated these data sources against (the aspirational state or what evidence of the *ideal* would look like) to better understand how explicitly or implicitly these courses were informed by theories of justice and the impacts that had on student learning- essentially creating a rubric for understanding and comparing the content we had collected as a program for each discrete course.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

We begin here by presenting the results of our content analysis across the data from the courses by noting similarities and trends observed across them, as well as the differences and their potential impact. These observations are recorded in Table 2.

Discussion

One primary pattern unearthed through this analysis is that even when service-learning is explicitly embedded into a course syllabus and learning objectives, it does not necessarily mean that students are gaining a critical consciousness. The course information and assessment data we collected, while evidencing student learning, does not showcase a clear connection to student social consciousness building. Literature around critical service-learning and liberatory education calls for educational practices to be more explicit - calling out injustices in practice and preparing students to see

Table 1. Data Sources Examined Against an Aspirational State for Each Data Source.

DATA SOURCE	ASPIRATIONAL STATE/WHAT WE 'EVALUATED' DATA SOURCES AGAINST
Course Syllabus	Clearly states it is an S-L course. States why it is an S-L course. S-L actively embedded into assignments, learning objectives, etc. Course is rooted within a theory of justice.
Pre-Service Student Surveys & Post-Service Student Evaluation/ Surveys	There is an increase in the level of understanding of how college education can benefit the community. There is a clear pattern around skills in the SAIL framework (systems thinking, inclusivity, & self-awareness) that were gained through service.
Faculty Course Planning Form	Selected "Analyze one or more social issues through the lens of the course's discipline and/or topic" and/or "Demonstrate critical reflection of service through guided activities" as a learning objective. Use language that showcases they are utilizing S-L for reasons beyond student learning - there is a recognition of how field/discipline contributes to social change/impact.
Teaching Assistant Documentation of 'Preparing Students for Service' activity	There are activities around cultural competency and responsible engagement and these activities talk about justice.
Virtual Service-Learning EXPO artifacts	Artifacts display student's recognition of how their experience contributed to justice and demonstrate critical reflection.

themselves as change agents (Love, 2019; Mitchell, 2008). Even with the addition of teaching assistants to support faculty in the work of preparing students for engagement and asking faculty members who utilize service-learning to express the *why* they do it, there seems to be a missing link between students in these courses reporting increased social consciousness and commitment, as defined institutionally through the SAIL framework (SAIL at Northeastern, n.d.).

Not seeing clear ways these courses are rooted in a theory of justice elicits new questions around what else may be happening to influence the student reflection and outcomes we see. Is there something else

happening in the course, other framing being used around social change and community impact? How much does the background of the students or faculty member matter - is there a difference across identities if they are able to make the connection to justice in their experience/teaching? The question of what *justice* really means in a service-learning, or experiential education, context is explored in Garvin et al. (2019) through a rhetorical, word association exercise of the phrase social justice. It is possible we could have seen different results if we chose a different analysis framework, one that casts a wider net of rhetoric related to justice. Additionally, while our program aligns itself with a transformative approach to justice,

Table 2. Similarities & Differences Across Data Sources from 1st- and 2nd-Year Service-Learning Courses.

DATA SOURCE	SIMILARITIES & TRENDS ACROSS COURSES EXAMINED	DIFFERENCES & THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACTS ACROSS COURSES EXAMINED
Course Syllabus	<p>All but one course syllabus explicitly stated/scoped that it was a service-learning course and explains why.</p> <p>Most of the courses included S-L as a graded component of the course- most commonly this was a separate part of the grade.</p> <p>All but one course syllabus (the same one that omitted information about it being an S-L course and why) either incorporate S-L into the course learning objectives or have a separate section of objectives.</p> <p>None of the courses examined explicitly named justice or articulated a theory of justice within which the course was situated.</p>	<p>All but one of the courses examined referenced the purpose of integrating service-learning into the course- both as a pedagogical approach, but also as a philosophical one -- this included direct ties into the learning objectives or a separate articulation of the outcomes associated with it.</p> <p>Despite overwhelming communication about what and why S-L, there was less consistency in how it was evaluated.</p>
Pre-Service Student Surveys & Post-Service Student Evaluation/Surveys	<p>Most courses did not have a measurable increase in understanding or gain in student skills around social consciousness and commitment.</p> <p>No course had a clear loss in skills gained and there was some consistency in the skills selected across courses, but nothing substantial.</p>	<p>One course had a measurable increase in students' reporting their self-awareness and inclusivity skills. The students in this same course demonstrated a strong understanding of how their education can benefit the community in the pre-service assessment.</p>
Faculty Course Planning Form	<p>Most faculty associated with these courses selected the relevant learning objectives.</p> <p>All courses with data stated why engaging in community was a benefit to student learning.</p> <p>None of the courses speak to how justice is a motivator in teaching a service-learning course.</p>	<p>Did not have clear responses from all faculty members for these courses, which calls into question what we know about the instructor's commitment.</p>
Teaching Assistant Documentation of 'Preparing Students for Service' activity	<p>Fairly consistently, the student leaders documented a plan to prepare their students for engagement with lessons around cultural competency and responsible engagement.</p> <p>None of the documentation from the courses examined explicitly illustrated plans to tie together the role of service-learning in working towards justice, nor did they mention or discuss justice in straightforward ways.</p>	<p>There was a wide range of variability in how student leaders were planning to incorporate/implement lessons from their trainings around Preparing Students for Service- it is likely that this variability is rooted in both how deeply integrated/not S-L is in the curriculum of the course, and also attributable to faculty member orientation toward the importance of/need for this work to be done explicitly.</p>
Virtual Service-Learning EXPO artifacts	<p>None of the courses had artifacts that were clearly tied to justice. Language around community impact was limited in all but one course.</p> <p>Artifacts were more focused on individual skills gained, ie. time management and communication.</p>	<p>Most course artifacts mentioned their actions within community, but did not reference the impact itself. There was still no direct line to justice.</p>

we wonder, but could not explore through our data, if the theory of justice used to ground an experiential education experience affects student outcomes.

The analysis we were able to conduct from existing data still leaves us with many questions and future considerations. One such set of questions being: *does it matter what the approach/underlying philosophy of justice is? Does that have an impact on the development of social consciousness and commitment among students?* While we were not able to extrapolate an answer to these questions in our data, it did offer an opportunity to consider which theories of justice may map to experiential education in practice. Table 3 maps examples of experiential education to four different theories of justice, each of which conceptualize social, racial, and environmental justice differently. There is still no one-size-fits-all practice or tool to have experiential education elucidate specific justice-oriented outcomes, yet our analysis helped us to see the need for showcasing what these various theories of justice look like in our field.

Limitations

As described in the methodology section, rather than being a rigorously conducted content analysis we pull upon best practices of the approach to better draw patterns and conclusions across data that we collect at a program level. Because of this, there are severe limitations to the generalizability and transferability of our insights as presented. However, repeating this approach to seek similar understanding or insight on other campuses and/or in other experiential contexts may serve to be illuminating in a reflective sense.

Additionally, while we extrapolate our understanding to broader forms of experiential education, we base our observations and reporting on one form of EE on one campus across just a subset of courses

offered in one semester. We encourage the reader to consider how one could create similar lines of inquiry to better understand how (or if) experiential education creates opportunities to develop social consciousness and commitment in students, more just communities in which our campuses reside, and what (if any) the role of the faculty member-as-facilitator has in whether those outcomes are realized.

Recommendations & Implications

Recommendations for Future Research

Building upon our findings, discussion, and even limitations, we suggest that this approach may have utility for program improvement and understanding intra-institutionally, as well as for cross-institutional research both in SLCE and more broadly across different forms of EE. Additionally, by expanding thinking in our field’s research and practice to include an interrogation of what we *mean* when we say ‘social justice’ as well as what experiential opportunities would look like that worked toward said justice could create systems of assessment, inquiry, and accountability that are currently missing. Further, determining the type of data, evidence, and aspirational realization-in-practice in various forms of EE is necessary to develop tools to better understand if the theory of justice used to ground an experiential education experience affects student outcomes as intended. Finally, more inquiry is needed into the through line between ‘inputs’ (i.e. explicitly naming a theory of justice; being clear about justice as a course outcome; opportunities that make linkages between course content, experiential learning, and social justice through course activities and reflection) and ‘outputs’ (increased social consciousness and commitment).

Implications for the Field of Experiential Education

Considering how experiential education purports to

Table 3. Mapping Forms of Experiential Education to Theories of Justice

THEORY OF JUSTICE	EXAMPLE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE THAT MAPS TO THE THEORY OF JUSTICE
Distributive	Internship experience where a student contributes to policy development or law making around advancing equity and fairness for all. Experience grounded in furthering a system where personal liberties align for all (Rawls, 1971)
Productive	A research-based experience or capstone where students analyze root causes and contexts of a specific social issue. Experience grounded in analyzing the root causes and developing strategy and agency in decision-making around the issue. (Berkey, 2017)
Restorative	A direct engagement opportunity with a student interacting one-on-one, building relationships, connecting with community members impacted by a specific social issue. Experience grounded in addressing the hurt and responsibility of victims and offenders in the systems (Johnstone, 2007).
Transformative	An integrated community-engagement opportunity with students developing solutions to a specific social issue that recognizes the role of individuals and broader community. Experience grounded in how individual challenges are rooted in the broader ecosystems of a community and therefore an opportunity to enact societal change. (Morris, 2000).

make learning more ‘real world,’ and, because we live in a world rife with inequity and injustice, it is important to ask how the experiences we provide and facilitate with and for our students not just impact their skill-based learning and future employability, but also if it makes them better equipped to contribute positively to society. Therefore, scholarship and practice in EE would dictate that we explore the following questions further and make our position on them clear:

- Does an articulated theory of justice matter?
- What matters (if not that)?
- How does our orientation toward justice (or the theoretical framework with which we most closely align) manifest in how we work with educators, partners, student leaders, and students in EE experiences and courses as it pertains to broader impact on the world?

Returning to the literature around critical service-learning and liberatory education (Love, 2019; Mitchell, 2008) that calls for educational practices to be more explicit, we must determine what it means to call out injustices in practice and prepare students to see themselves as change agents. Further, we need to better understand how we know if and when experiential education approaches are successful in accomplishing these goals so we can better and more intentionally design these learning opportunities to accomplish these ends.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is a gap at the intersection of experiential education and various theories of justice that leaves us with a lack of explicit guidance on how to actually design experiential education opportunities in ways that foster the development of a social justice mindset, attitudes, and behaviors in students and that contribute meaningfully to communities. As illustrated above, one primary pattern unearthed through our analysis is that even when service-learning is explicitly embedded into a course syllabus and learning objectives, it does not necessarily mean that students are gaining a critical consciousness. Through this, we argue the need for explicating what these various theories of justice look like in different forms of experiential education so we are better able as a field to purposefully connect our approaches to building a more socially, racially, and environmentally just world.

Content analysis is one method through which we can take what we already have (various data sources

from experiential learning activities) to better understand how the framing and explicitness of inputs (i.e. whether a theory of justice is articulated and/or if the potential for impact of the EE on the world is communicated) maps to observable outputs (student growth and development in social consciousness and commitment, as well as positive community impact and contribution). By problematizing our use of “social justice” as one-size-fits-all, we can better practice a customized approach to justice-related processes and outcomes that are tailored to the students and external partners within experiential education opportunities, the knowledge with which the experience connects, and to the facilitator/educator’s orientation toward this work. In doing so, we move closer to the aspirations of experiential liberatory education. ■

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The background of the page features several large, sweeping, curved bands of blue. These bands originate from the left side and curve towards the right, with varying shades of blue ranging from a deep navy to a lighter sky blue. In the top right corner, a small portion of a photograph is visible, showing a snowy mountain peak against a clear blue sky.

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